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The  
Story of Beaumont



*By*  
FLORENCE STRATTON  
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[1925]



*To*  
*Ruth Wiess Sergent*





## FOREWORD

IN "The Story of Beaumont", Beaumont has an achievement which few cities and their schools can enjoy. Its possession certainly places our schools in a restricted class so far as local historical material is concerned.

Far sighted and thoughtful school authorities everywhere recommend that a course in local history and civics be given in the upper grades and in the high school, so that children will not grow up unappreciative and ignorant of their home city and its possibilities. David Compayre, a noted French authority on education, has said "Growth comes from realizing possibilities." Certainly no city can fully realize its possibilities for the future unless it studies its achievements in the past. But it is usually very difficult to obtain local history in a form such that it can be used in the school. This book offers such material.

There is nothing finer or better to promote citizenship, a love of country and a high resolve to serve the community, the state and the nation than to teach such histories in our schools. Beaumont and the schools owe a debt of gratitude to the author of this volume, not only for the facts in the book but for the charm and interest with which each chapter is written and illustrated.

In stating that this book will prove of great worth to the children in the schools, let me add that I would not create the impression that it will not prove of high value and gripping interest to the grown-up as well. He will find the book written in readable, whimsical language, bristling with human interest on every page and filled with information that every person in Beaumont will keenly appreciate.

M. E. MOORE,  
*Superintendent of Schools.*



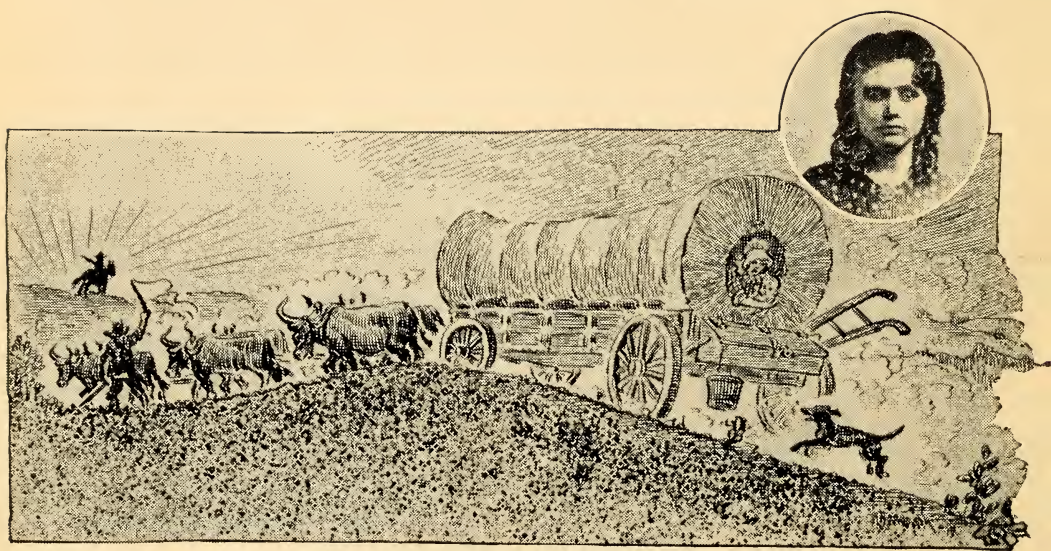
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**SHE CAME IN A COVERED WAGON—AND HAS LIVED TO SEE SKYSCRAPERS.**

NOTICE  
Please do not write in this  
book or turn down the pages

# The Story of Beaumont



## The Covered Wagon

**A** LONG snake-like whip swept over the heads of a line of plodding oxen, and with a peculiar twist of its curling length produced a report similar to the explosion of a revolver. This, like the shot fired at Concord, was a sound heard round the world, heralding the coming of the covered wagon, and making history as certainly as did that memorable April fight.

In the year 1848 a covered wagon caravan passed through the little hamlet of Natchitoches on the Natchitoches river, in the state of Louisiana. On the rear hung a coop of chickens, along the wagon's side were strapped various articles of household furnishing, while beneath in its shade trotted a trio of long-eared, long-bodied hounds, the one indispensable necessity of the pioneer's outfit.

Beside the team walked a pioneer and explorer. Comfortable as the circumstances permitted, his young wife and their children rode upon the wagon beneath its spreading white canvas top. The youngest of the children was but a few months old, for she was born on the little stream they had just quitted, the seventh of their family of sons and

daughters, each of whom had claimed a different state in the union for his birthplace.

For this man and his wife were pioneers of the truest type. Westward, always westward, they set their faces, their eyes wooed by the rosy tints of the setting sun. From the bellow of the Atlantic's surf on North Carolina's shore they had set forth as bride and groom to make their way into the far west. By slow stages, tarrying now a few days, now a year, while they planted and harvested a crop, they met and subdued the trials of the frontier, and moved steadily onward toward the then little-known regions of the far southwest.

As they set out upon their journey westward from Natchitoches, they entered upon the last and most difficult stage of their migration, and it was many months later that they finally halted upon the eastern bank of the Neches river and hailed the lone ferryman on the western shore of the stream.

Thus came to this section the covered wagon with its precious human freight to be added to that small company of kindred spirits who had preceded them and found the end of their rainbow on the banks of the Neches river. The new arrivals were Robert Kidd and his wife, eight years out of Salem, North Carolina, with their seven children.

Robert Kidd was born in Amherst county, Virginia, and married Miss Rebecca Hitchcock of Salem,



North Carolina. Soon afterward the couple began their long journey into the wilderness, and years later reached their destination here. They became active factors in the settlement along the river, a little below the present site of the city of Beaumont, and here the children grew to manhood and womanhood.

Elizabeth, the youngest, born on the Natchitoches river while the family was enroute here, became the wife of A. E. Caswell, and at this time, 1925, still makes her home in Beaumont. Her children and grandchildren are among the present prominent families of the city of Beaumont, while her father, the late Captain Robert Kidd, wandering farther west in the meantime, finally came back to Jefferson county and spent the latter years of his life here, dying in the year 1889 at the age of 116.

When the Kidd family arrived in 1849 there was little sign and less promise of the busy metropolis now Beaumont. The hamlet of a few scattered log houses along the stream's higher western bank was uninviting enough in both social and business aspects, and many who came hither then continued on their way to other fields. But the few remained and took up the task of wrestling their livelihood from the wilderness about them. A few small tracts of grain for man and beast measured the farming activities, most of the pioneers devoting themselves

to trapping and to the gathering of cattle from the prairies about. Cattle grew wild and thrived on the long prairie and marsh grasses and the settlers found profit in killing them for their hides and tallow, the only things which could then be sent to market.

The coast plains at that time teemed with cattle driven south year by year by the blizzards that swept over the inland prairies. Reaching the gulf plain they could go no farther, with the result that year by year the maverick herds grew larger and larger, until the settler found countless numbers of cattle ready for slaughter.

Traffic such as there was, was carried on by small boats which came up the Neches river and along the gulf coast from Galveston, with now and then a larger ship anchored in deep water off Sabine bar loading heavier cargo, lightered thence by barge from up the river.

There was ample market for such products as the settlers were able to gather for the buyers, but the greater part of the exchange of goods was by barter. Cargoes of furniture, cloth, sugar, coffee and hardware were brought in by the ship captains and exchanged for fur, hides, tallow, timbers or such other articles as the settlement had to offer.

Local trade was carried on in the same way. There was little actual money in circulation. The

housewife's small change consisted of the furs of the smaller animals, and with them she purchased the few items for household use that resourceful woman required, while the husband bartered bear-skins for his gun or a load of hides for a plow.

These were counted the slighter inconveniences incident to pioneer life along the Neches. Perhaps the greatest of all the hardships lay in the unhealthy conditions the settlers found. The undrained areas were sources of illness, and malaria and other diseases of the semi-tropics wrought ceaseless warfare upon them. Physicians there were none, and knowledge of the treatment of disease was nil. Yet despite what would now appear to those who live here amid surroundings from which practically all sources of physical ills sufficient to threaten their extermination, have been routed by science and labor, the hardy, seasoned bodies of the pioneers withstood also that great handicap and survived, many of them to a ripe old age.

Among these is the little heroine of the Covered Wagon—Elizabeth Kidd Caswell. Mrs. Caswell, still active in both mind and body, despite her years and the hardships of her early life, survives to tell the story of the very beginnings of the proud city of Beaumont. She remembers clearly the daily routine of the settlers of that day, and though she has seen every step taken by the community in its

development, she confesses that in the presence of the present day achievement, her memories of the earlier period seem only disordered dreams.

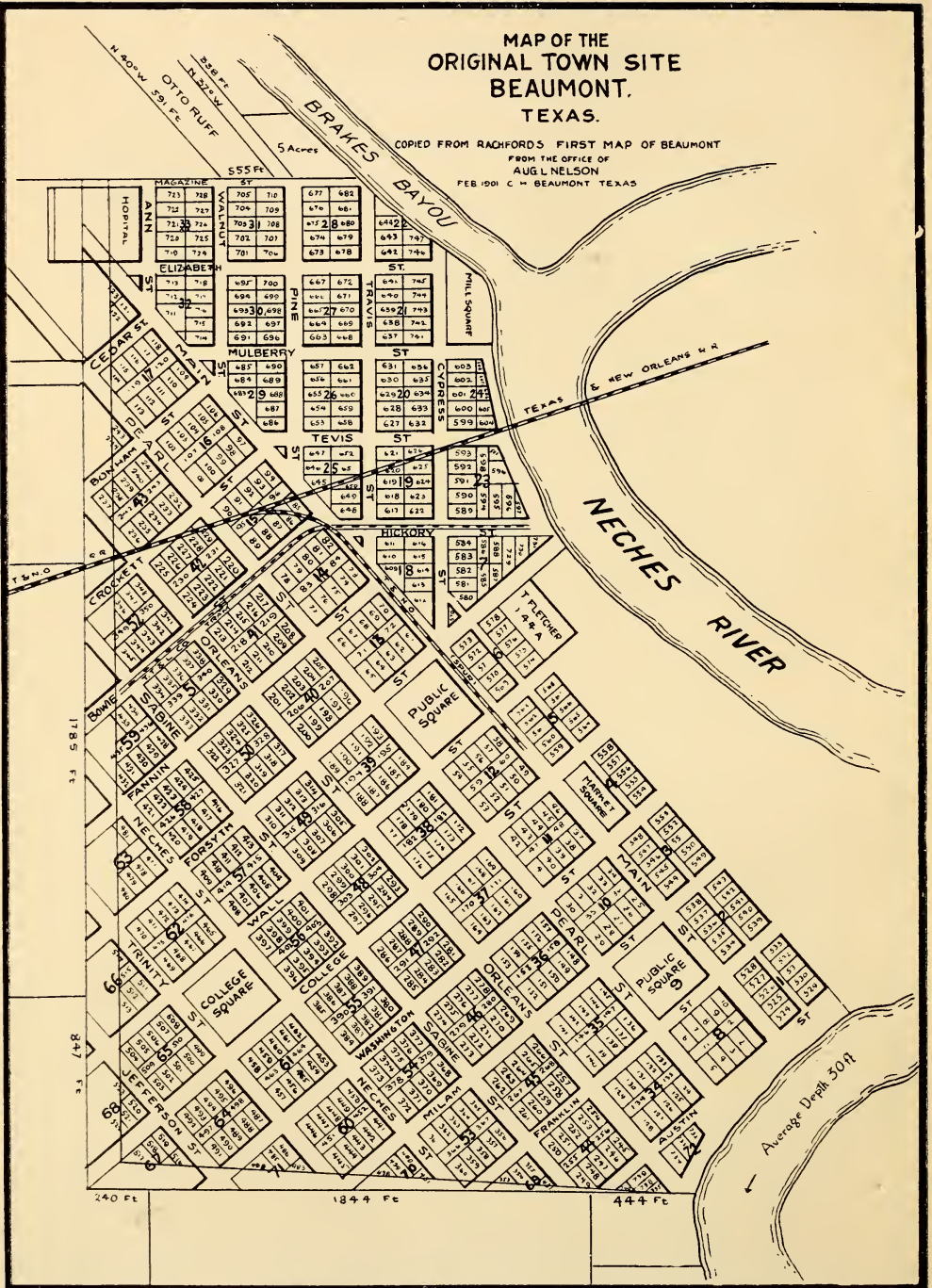
And recently the granddaughter of this child of the covered wagon, this survivor of the handful of people who formed the nucleus for the city's present population of 50,000; this woman, who easily within her own memory knew the slow plodding, indolent ox and the covered wagon as the only means of transport—this woman's granddaughter was a passenger in an airplane, and she herself read with no great surprise of the circumnavigation of the globe through the air.





# MAP OF THE ORIGINAL TOWN SITE BEAUMONT. TEXAS.

COPIED FROM RICHFORD'S FIRST MAP OF BEAUMONT  
FROM THE OFFICE OF  
AUG L NELSON  
FEB 1901 C - BEAUMONT TEXAS





### Beginnings of Beaumont

**J**EFFERSON county, which included the present Orange county and part of Hardin county, was in the period of its first settlement a part of the Lorenzo de Zavalla colony under the government of the State of Coahuila and Texas, with headquarters at Nacogdoches, and was first called Liberty county. The contract between de Zavalla and the state of Coahuila and Texas was made in 1829. From Nacogdoches all business was transacted and there were the officers of the Mexican government through whom the land grants were made.

The section of the colony which forms the present Jefferson county had scattered settlers prior to 1834. But the first application for any of the land in the present town site of Beaumont was made by Noah Tevis on December 13, 1834, though Tevis with his family had lived here prior to that date as old records show. In many instances colonists lived for a number of years on the land before they possessed any section of it through grant of the government. One petition on record shows an application made in 1829 for land in the county, but not until 1835 was the land surveyed and the title of possession given by the government.

On January 16, 1835, one-half a league of land, approximately 2214 acres, was granted by the

government of the state of Coahuila and Texas to Noah Tevis, the grant lying along the Neches river front. The settlement was then called Tevis Bluff, and the Neches river often called the Snow or White river.

An interesting insight into the legal proceedings necessary to obtaining land from the government is afforded by reading the petition and grant to Noah Tevis, as recorded in the General Land Office.

#### PETITION\*

*\*Punctuation and capitalization as in original petition.*

"To the Special Commissioner of His Excellency Lorenza de Zavalla's colony, Noah Tevis, a Native of the United States of the North, with due respect; would appear before you and says: That induced by the liberal provisions of the colonization laws of this State, I have come with my family, composed of my wife and seven children, to settle in it; if in view of the accompanying certificate you deem it proper to admit me as a colonist of said Colony, granting me the quantity of land to which I am entitled in the vacant Territory of the same. Therefore I request you to do as aforesaid, wherein I shall receive justice and favor.

Nacogdoches, December 13, 1834."

#### TITLE OF POSSESSION

"I, Citizen George Antonio Nixon, Special Commissioner of the Supreme Government of the State

of Coahuila and Texas, for distributing lands, giving possession thereof, and issuing titles to the Colonists under the Colonization Contract of his Excellency Lorenza de Zavalla: Whereas, Noah Tevis has been admitted as Colonist under the Colonization Contract entered into by His Excellency Lorenza de Zavalla with the Supreme Government of the State on the 12th day of March, 1829. The said Noah Tevis fully proved that he is married, his family consisting of eight persons, and the qualifications required by the Colonization law of March 1825, being founded in him, in conformity to said law, and to the instructions by which I am governed, in the name of the State, I grant and transfer unto the said Noah Tevis, and put him in real personal possession of one-half a league of land, it being all vacant land found in the locality where he has his house and field on the West bank of the river Neches, the boundaries whereof are described on the map and field notes returned by the Surveyor, Citizen Arthur Henrie . . . Therefore exercising the powers in me vested by the proper law, and subsequent instructions, I issue the present title and order that a testimonio of it be transcribed, and be delivered to the party interested, so that he may own and enjoy the tract of land.

Given in the town of Nacogdoches on the 16th day of the month of January, 1835. Signed by me

with two assisting witnesses according to law.

GEORGE ANTO NIXON,

*Assisting:* Joseph Carrire *Commissioner."*

*Assisting:* Eligion Albarado

State of Texas.

The new settlers were to pay for each league of grazing lands thirty dollars, and for each labor (117) acres, three and one-half dollars, but they had six years to pay same, in three installments, the first to be paid in four years, the second in five years, and the third in six years from the date of settlement.

The original town of Beaumont was formed of land that was in the Tevis grant, but included in the present city limits of Beaumont is land granted by the Mexican government to David Brown, January 1835; J. W. Bullock, January 1835; James Drake, July 1835; and patent land rights by the Republic and state of Texas to Absolom Williams, November 1841; to James McFaddin in July, 1845; to William McFaddin in July, 1845; to D. J. O. Millard, in July, 1851; to W. P. H. McFaddin, March, 1905.

In September, 1835, Noah Tevis sold to Henry Millard fifty acres of his original grant for a consideration of \$500. Noah Tevis died December 6, 1835, less than a year after the land was granted to him, and left his estate to the management of his



widow, Nancy Tevis, who in 1837 sold to Joseph Grigsby fifty acres of land.

The town of Beaumont was laid off in July, 1837, and the boundary lines established in an agreement between Nancy Tevis, and heirs of Noah Tevis, the Joseph P. Pulsifer company, which was composed of Henry Millard, Joseph Pulsifer and Thomas P. Huling; and Joseph Grigsby. The original plot included an acreage of two hundred acres, all within the original Tevis grant, but one hundred acres of which now belonged to the Pulsifer company; fifty acres to Nancy Tevis and fifty acres to Joseph Grigsby. The record of this mutual agreement into a company of the owners of the land clearly defines the boundaries and the accompanying map shows the original town site, with the streets as named in the deed of partition.

In 1839 the members of the town site company—Nancy Tevis, Joseph Grigsby and the Pulsifer company, divided the property in the boundary lines of the town, designating and recording it in the deed of partition, the personal property of each of the three members. Certain tracts of land not included in the private ownership were then set aside for “public roads and commons”, the partition deed stating: “And the said parties of the three parts do hereby covenant and agree that all streets, commons, lots of ground within the limits of the said

town of Beaumont not hereinbefore enumerated and described as belonging to the aforesaid parties of the three parts or other persons or individuals in severalty be and the same are hereby given, granted, released and forever quitclaimed into the corporation of the town of Beaumont, and their successors in office forever for the purposes of said streets, highways, and commons of said town and shall be forever kept open for the free use of the citizens thereof." This deed is signed by Nancy Hutchinson, G. W. Tevis, Gilbert Stephenson, Joseph Pulsifer, Thomas P. Huling, Henry Millard and Joseph Grigsby.

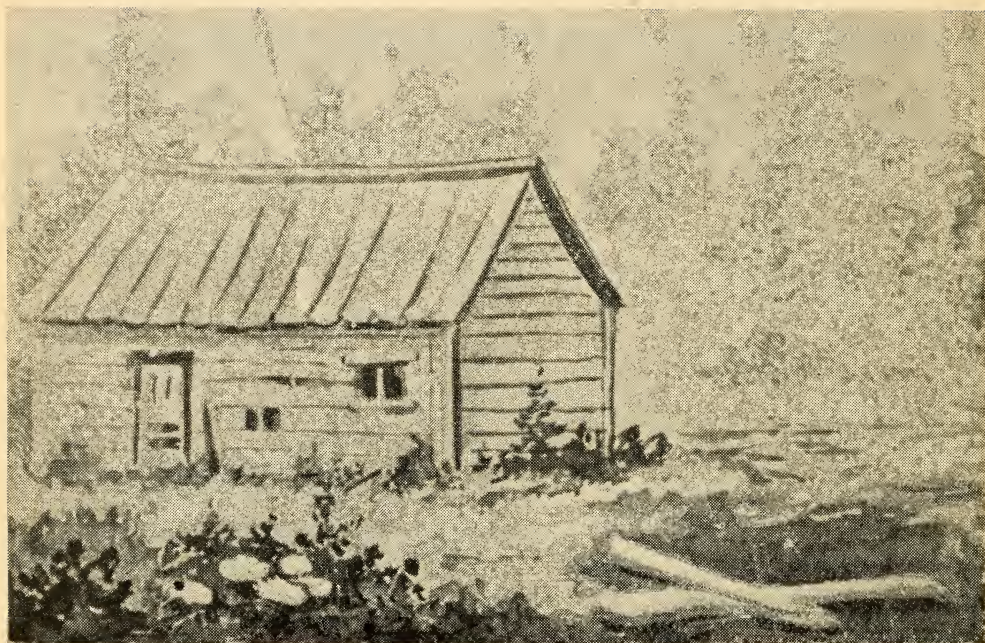
These lots or commons as designated in the earliest maps of the town site, one of which was prepared for Millard, and one for Huling, include the present court house property, Keith park, Millard school grounds, the high school campus, and the city hall site.

A typical family of that period, the pioneers that laid out the town of Beaumont, was the Noah Tevis family, composed of Mr. and Mrs. Tevis and their eight children, Andrew Jackson, George Washington, Napoleon Bonaparte, Noah, Roland; Mary Tevis who married Gilbert Stephenson; Delilah who married Pierre Lemane, and Lovesa who married Daniel Cheshire.

On September 9, 1838, Nancy Tevis, widow of Noah Tevis, married Joseph Hutchinson, and







WHERE NOAH TEVIS LIVED.

"grandma Nancy Hutchinson" left an indelible impress on the minds of the pioneers, a number of whom still recall her, her home and her fine spirit of service to the community. She died in 1863, dividing her property equally among her children with the following special clauses: "I give and devise to my son, Andrew J. Tevis, my negro man Abe; I give and devise to my granddaughter, Elizabeth Tevis, daughter of Noah Tevis, my negro girl Betsy; I give and devise to my daughter, Polly Stephenson, my mare, buggy, and also feather bed and the bedding belonging to the same, also my tin safe."

An index to the names of the early settlers of the county is shown in the marriage records of the county for the first five years of its settlement, from 1837 to 1842, as reproduced below:

### 1837

Gilbert Stephenson to Mary Tevis.

James Drake to Nancy Burton.

### 1838

Jesse Dyson to Hester Perkins.

Abner Ashworth to Rosalee Collier.

James Stevenson to Caroline Lewis.

William Ashworth to Delilah Gallier.

Joseph Dyches to Elizabeth Lewis.

David McFadyan to Jerusha Dyches.

George W. Tevis to Jane Williams.

Hiriam Bunch to Eliza Perkins.  
David Cole to Sydney L. Yocum.  
William McFadyan to Rachael Williams.  
Thomas H. Brenan to Jane McFeren.  
Duncan St. Clair to Jemina Jett.  
Absolom Jett to Polly Arthur.  
Peyton Bland to Susan Harmon.  
Benjamin Johnson to Rachael Garner.  
Joseph Hutchinson to Mrs. Nancy Tevis.  
George Clark to Mrs. Filetha Millhamm.  
James Simmons to Hannah Richie.  
M. B. Littlefield to Sarah Bolinger.  
Silas Palmer to Isabel Votaw.  
Stephen Jackson to Susan Choat.  
James Waitea to Elizabeth Pevito.  
Jack Garner to Matilda Hays.

**1839**

Joel Lewis to Roda Williams.  
Augusta W. Archer to Matilda Hays.  
Baptist Edmond to Lavira Clark.  
Francis Gallier to Mary Johnson.  
David Garner to Matilda Hampshire.  
Elijah Allen to Mary Hart.  
Francis Zillener to Syrenea Myers.

**1840**

David E. Lawhorn to Nancy Carr.  
William Ashworth to Mary Bunch.  
John A. Williams to Margaretta Jane Dugat.



George Bryan to Nancy Millard.

Hezekiah Williams to Elizabeth Anderson.

Cyrus Thompson to Mrs. Melina Whittington.

Elias Stone to Mary Blackman.

John Turner to Amanda Stephenson.

S. H. Hough to Augustine Smith.

Thomas A. Stanwood to Mrs. Margaretta Jane Williams.

Warren Goodin to Miss Martha B. Patillo.

John M. Dirusia to Miss Tabitha McDougold.

### 1841

William D. Thomason to Lydia Clark.

S. Hopmore Millard to Miss Mary Bryan.

Daniel Sinclair to Miss Mary Ann Moore.

James Chesher, Jr. to Martha Hickman.

Nathan Bonner to Frances Ann Griffin.

Louis Bouitton to Mrs. Tabitha M. Baker.

L. J. Yeates to Hester Ann F. Patillo.

Monson Boews to Catherine Blackman.

### The First Wedding

THE bank of the Neches was the scene of Beaumont's first romance and marriage, Miss Mary Tevis, oldest daughter of Noah and Nancy Tevis and Gilbert Stephenson plighting their troth November 27, 1832, in the old Tevis home located just above the Southern Pacific bridge.

The guests gathered there on that wedding day 93 years ago glimpsed through the tangled growth the gleam of water the same as now, but how different was everything else. Now there are ships, wharves, homes, paved streets and automobiles. Then there was an impenetrable forest for a sky line.

Within that fastness across the Neches river, the groom had hacked out a home for his bride. And it takes no great flight of fancy to picture the courtship between the pioneer girl and boy, with true love overcoming the hardships of those crude days when mere existence proved a continual battle.

Don't you know they must have signalled each other with flaming pine knots dark nights, or given bird calls or dreamed over an agreed-upon star when the river was at its flood and no pioneer Leander dared to brave the Texas Hellespont.





MARY TEVIS.

GILBERT STEPHENSON.



And it takes no great flight of fancy either to picture that wedding scene.

A log house with mud chimney was the setting for Beaumont's first marriage. Huge logs blazed on the hearth, dispelling the November chill and throwing into relief the rugged features and horny hands of the pioneer men and women assembled to wish the young couple happiness. Homespun frock and sunbonnet, long hickory shirt and coon skin cap were features of the wedding costumes of bride and groom, and their wedding guests were similarly attired as pioneering permitted little variety in dress.

Afterward there was a feast and the Tevis table groaned under its weight of venison, bear steaks, wild turkeys and ducks right out of Mr. Tevis's own back yard and the health of the bride was pledged in Neches river water.

Up to this point, the pioneer wedding differed in no vital particular from one solemnized here in 1925. But very different were the preliminary proceedings.

At that time there was no law in Texas for the marriage of people, except the laws of the Catholic church on the subject, and the ceremony had to be performed by an ordained priest of that church. There was then no church here of any protestant

denomination; no civil officer with authority to marry a couple as the law now is, and there were no priests, except possibly one at San Antonio. So it was a rule of necessity that couples had to marry by civil agreement or a common law contract.

But the common law as we have it now was not here. So there was established a policy of marrying by bond, a written contract to marry according to law when there was a law provided for marriage and someone authorized to perform the ceremony. When or where this policy was inaugurated is not known, but it was first introduced about 1830, so far as there are any records.

The parties entering into the contract bound themselves in various sums of money or property, to be married by a priest or by an officer of the law, the old records showing contracts from \$5,000 to \$12,000 for marriage bonds. Many of these on record tell interesting stories, several of the bonds being forfeited for failure of one of the parties to live up to the contract. In one instance a bond of \$5,000 was forfeited by the husband and paid to the wife and heirs.

Here is a copy of a contract between Thomas H. Brenan, clerk of the local court, and Jane McFerron; July 16, 1835.

Thomas H. Brenan and Jane McFerron to Thomas H. Brenan and Jane McFerron:



"In the town of Liberty on the 16 day of July, 1835, and before William Duncan, second judge and notary public ex. of the jurisdiction of Liberty acting in the absence of first judge of said jurisdiction and the instrumental witnesses whose names are at the end of this instrument, come Thomas H. Brenan and Jane McFerron both of this jurisdiction of Liberty whom I know and to whose acts I give full faith and credit, who acknowledge themselves bound the one to the other in the sum of ten thousand dollars good and lawful money of the Republic of Mexico to the payments of which they bind themselves, their persons and property presents and future, conditioned: That whereas the aforesaid Thomas H. Brenan and Jane McFerron have mutually agreed to join together in the bonds of matrimony which they believe to be a rite established by God and sanctioned by all civilized nations. Now if they, the said Thomas Brenan and Jane McFerron shall at the first convenient opportunity have their marriage confirmed agreeable to the rites and ceremonies of the Holy Church then this bond be void; otherwise to remain in full force and virtue of all of which they acknowledged and signed before me, the instrumental witnesses being Milton A. Hardin and William Kibbee together with my assistance with whom I sign to authenticate my act."

When the Texans gained independence from Mexico and established the republic of Texas, the couples



married by bond were married under the new law, and their licenses and marriages recorded. The first marriage recorded was that of Gilbert Stephenson and Mary Tevis, and the marriage license reads: "Whereas Gilbert Stephenson has this day applied to me for license to marry Mary Tevis, at the same time stating that he was married by bond on the 27th day of November, 1832, by G. A. Patillo, and that he wished to have said marriage confirmed according to law. You are therefore authorized and licensed to celebrate the rites of matrimony between said Gilbert Stephenson and Mary Tevis according to law.—In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand this 4th day of November, 1837."

Gilbert Stephenson, so far as history or tradition goes, was not only the first man to marry in Beaumont, but was also the first white man to walk over or see the place where the city now stands.

On Christmas eve, 1876, Thomas J. Russell and C. C. Caswell were standing on the platform in front of the Caswell store in Cypress street when an old man came slowly along. His appearance indicated one who had passed his three score years and ten, and who had been used to life and labor on a farm. His face was kindly, intelligent, and honest.

A norther was blowing and a cold mist falling. The stranger stepped on the platform in the shelter and remarked that the weather was too inclement for

him to go home that evening. He lived across the river in Orange county about four miles.

This was Gilbert Stephenson, who explained to the men: "This is the first Christmas eve for over 40 years that I have not been with my family. I have never failed to be with my wife on Christmas eve until now. I want to go home this evening; my family is looking for me. But I can't go out in this weather. It's too far for me to walk through the swamp."

The story, as told by Mr. Stephenson himself to Judge T. J. Russell, who in turn told it to the writer, states that he arrived on the east bank of the Neches river on Christmas eve, 1824, and camped for the night. He had his gun, his shot pouch, powder horn and piece of punk. His camping place was about one hundred yards from where his house afterwards stood, and where he took his young bride to live on Christmas eve, 1832.

Mr. Stephenson was born and reared in east Louisiana, and when he started out west to hunt a new home, crossed the Sabine river above where the city of Orange now flourishes, at a place subsequently known as Le Due's ferry, and came in afoot to his camping place, passing north of Aroya Adams and Aroya Vaca, above where there was water. But then neither of these aroyas, now known as Adams bayou and Cow bayou, had a name, and

there was not a single white man nor Indian living in the territory known as Orange county. There were no cattle, nor other stock. It was the primitive wild of nature.

He crossed the Neches about the mouth of Beard's bayou on a raft of small logs, hastily constructed by himself and came up along the bluff shore to the place where the city of Beaumont stands. Then he went on to Liberty where there was a settlement, and down to Moss bluff on the Trinity river and on to Anahuac on Galveston bay. He traveled about over the country as far as the Brazos river, but finally returned and made his settlement where he first camped. In 1835 he located his headright league there, and his descendants still occupy the place.

During the eight years between the time when he first camped on the bluff east of Beaumont across the river and his marriage Stephenson cleared up a field for crops, built a house, bought some cattle and horses and certainly these eight years were not idle ones. Bare necessities of living placed heavy demands on the pioneers. There were no stores for the sale of goods, groceries, clothes, and no post-office. The only news received was when some settler came in from the old states, who could tell who was president of the United States, governor of Louisiana or Mississippi, how the people were

getting along. Occasionally a man would bring in a newspaper.

Sometimes a small sail boat from New Orleans would come along and trade up and down the river, and among the chief objects of trade were powder and lead, and fish hooks. Small crops of corn were raised. To make bread it would be grated or parched before the fire. Roasting ears with the shucks on were roasted in the hot ashes, or boiled and made into hominy. Hunting and fishing furnished much of the food in those day of life in the primitive wilderness. But the people were always hopeful of the future.

The story of Gilbert Stephenson, his life, trials, hardships, loves, problems and ambitions, is the story of all the pioneers and of what they braved in the building of the nation.



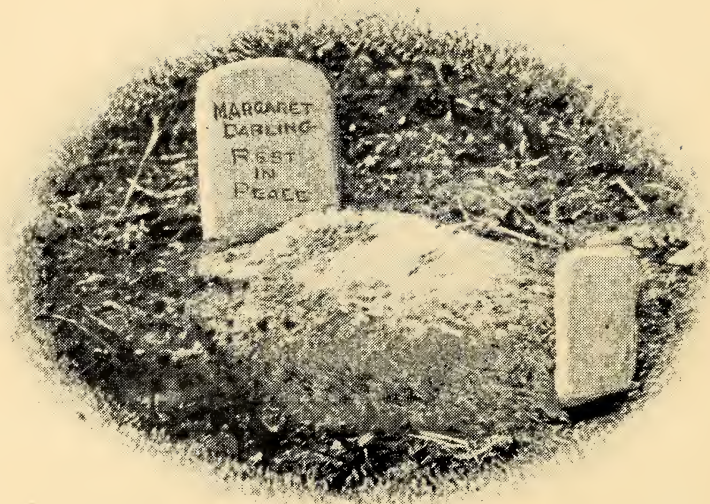
### A Love Story

**T**HAT men who fared forth to brave the labors and dangers of the wilderness were strong-minded and sturdy of physique might be taken for granted. The unknown beyond the frontier held no charm for the frail or timid of either sex. So the student finds no cause for wonder in the material achievements of the pioneer, for he would not have ventured upon the task before him had he not been of the mental and physical fiber which both fitted him for and inclined him to the undertaking.

The student therefore, visioning the pioneer, sees something of the hardness and sturdiness, and reading of his achievements, learns of the results of his toils and privations, and into that record he finds it difficult to weave a thread of romance, a woof of tender sentiment. He might as readily picture the rough coated, towering oak bringing forth the shrinking, delicate violet.

But hearts were tender in those days though bodies were hard, and sweet sentiment sang to the bearded pioneer in harmony with the caroling of the birds, just as it does now and ever has. History makes no record of the love stories of man and maid while the axe hewed their homes out of the





THE MAIDEN'S GRAVE.

wilderness, and for these we must rely upon legend and family lore.

One of these legends tells of the love of Joseph Pulsifer for Margaret Grigsby, and his steadfastness to his sweetheart when she was but a memory. Because it serves so well to soften our estimates of his contemporaries, it is set down here.

Joseph Pulsifer was one of the small company of earlier settlers who laid out the town of Beaumont. He had come to the little settlement from the east and established a drug business at a point just across Pearl street from where the courthouse now stands. He was one of the earlier volunteers to join the patriot army that eventually won Texas freedom, and afterwards served as clerk of the county.

Margaret Grigsby was a daughter of Joseph Grigsby, wealthy cotton planter, living at Grigsby's bluff, near the site of Port Neches. Joseph Pulsifer loved her and his love was returned, and they were to become man and wife. While they waited for the war's echoes to die away and the new-born state to find its balance, they played, just as lovers now, among the prairie flowers and beneath the spreading trees where the birds trilled in love notes no tenderer than those that sang in their own hearts. On the quiet bosom of the Neches they floated in the moonlight and builded castles in the air, even



as sweetly sentimental lovers do now, and visioned the home they would together build, and spoke, perhaps timidly of the family they would found.

Then death came and took Margaret away, only a few weeks before the wedding was to have taken place, and Sorrow sat beside the young lover where Happiness had briefly lingered. And Sorrow remained with him throughout his days, for the legend relates that Joseph Pulsifer never found another sweetheart and remained throughout a long life faithful to a memory.

A short while after Margaret's death, Joseph embarked in a small sailboat for New Orleans, and successfully braving the waters of the gulf, brought back a plain marble slab upon which he engraved with his own hands the words:

*"Margaret Darling, Rest in Peace."*

This he placed over her grave beneath towering forest trees. While he lived he cared for the little mound and for many years after he was gone the people, knowing the story, protected the grave and kept it inviolate—a service in which they testified that the sentiment which moved Joseph Pulsifer had a place in their own hearts.

But the time came when the progress of industry, the coming of the Texas Company, blotted out the lonely grave. Cattle were loosed upon the plains

and sought shade beneath the trees that sheltered the mortal Margaret, and beneath their hoofs the monument to a faithful love was ground to dust, leaving only legend to preserve the story of Joseph and Margaret as proof that hearts were both tender and steadfast in those days.

### La Salle's Grave

**M**ORE than one historian declares that Robert Cavalier Sieur de la Salle, was murdered and buried at the "crossing about fifty miles up the Neches river", supposedly where the Beaumont Country Club stands today.

The exact spot where Father Anastase scooped out a shallow grave for his friend and benefactor, with no greater mark to place above him than the grassy turf pressed upon his breast, will probably never be known, but on account of the excellent camping grounds, high banks affording safe landing and the fact that the Beaumont Country Club marks an ancient crossing of the Neches long known as Collier's Ferry, it is agreed that the "Adventurer", as French courtiers called him, lies buried where now hundreds of automobiles whisk by daily and where youth and age meet to revel.

Save the moss-covered trees, the silent winding stream and high banks, little remains to remind one of the scenes upon which La Salle gazed when vainly trying to find the mouth of the Mississippi, his first great discovery in the wilds of America.

The modern club building, the green golf links, the paved highway and power ferry have taken the place of overhanging trees and deep forest which







HE RESTS HERE.

hid the treacherous assassin who, fearing the just wrath of the explorer, fired the shot that made Texas the burial ground of its discoverer.

The discovery of Texas by La Salle was accidental. He had discovered the mouth of the Mississippi, raised the French flag, and in 1694, received permission from Louis XIV to return to America and plant a colony at that point. But the dream was never realized by him. It was his destiny to become the discoverer of Texas.

Sailing from France with four ships and three hundred souls, the explorer headed for the mouth of the Mississippi. Efficient in tracking the savage in the wilderness he was full of confidence, but his instinct served to no purpose in navigating the seas. Missing the mouth of the Mississippi, the hardy pioneers landed in Matagorda Bay on January 1, 1685. After many hardships La Salle on January 12, 1687, decided to make another search for the Mississippi or get into communication with his friend, de Tonti of the Iron Hand, called so on account of his having lost one of his hands in battle and his substitute of an iron one. He had left de Tonti in the Mississippi territory on the previous trip.

Streams were swollen and progress was difficult, but La Salle finally reached the villages of the friendly Nassonite and Cennis Indians on the Trinity

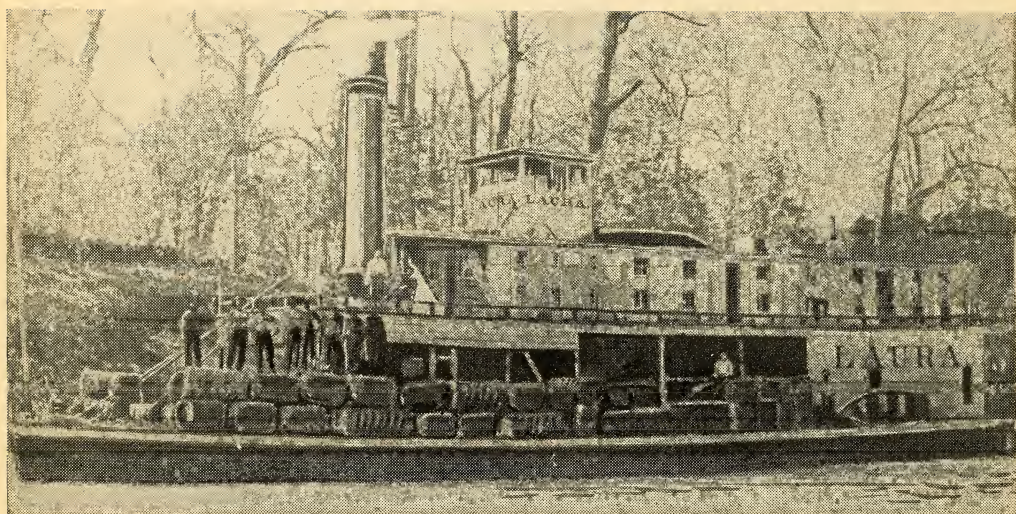
and Neches rivers. While camped on the latter stream, according to Rev. Homer S. Thrall, author of "A Pictorial History of Texas", La Salle and his nephew were prostrated by fever.

Four months later at the Neches river crossing, Moragnet, La Salle's nephew, who for some time had been on bad terms with L'Archeveque and Duhuat, two other members of the party, was murdered by them while sleeping. Nika, also of the company, sent in search of game, was killed at the same time. They knew that the stern soldier would demand justice, and, fearing his vengeance, determined to take his life also.

L'Archeveque, a lad of only eighteen years, was selected to lead his trusting chief into ambush. When La Salle appeared in search of his nephew, a bullet from an assassin's rifle ended the earthly career of the gallant courtier, the stout-hearted soldier, the intrepid adventurer and dreamer, whose body is supposed to be buried at the "crossing about fifty miles up the Neches river."







**BEFORE THE IRON HORSE.**

### Early River Trading

**T**IME was when the entire Nacogdoches territory was served by steamboats plying the Neches and the Angelina, and this commerce would be going on today were it not for rail competition.

There are men still living who commanded boats in the old days, and around them hover a shadowy group, who too served on the old side wheelers as they chugged to and fro on the Neches and who, like the boats themselves, have saluted and passed on.

Captain W. E. Rogers, a familiar figure on the streets of Beaumont for fifty years, and Captain E. I. Kellie of Jasper are among the navigators of the Neches yet alive. Captain W. A. Fletcher, Captain William Wiess, Captain Napoleon Wiess, Captain Cave Johnson, Captain James Dalton, belong to the latter group who helped to make river history here.

Descendants of these men are among Beaumont's most substantial citizenry, and some of the community's largest estates and greatest fortunes had their beginning in the river transport system.

The little side-wheelers plied the rivers much as a local freight train is now operated. They started their small cargoes of supplies to the settlers on the

trip up the stream and on the way back gathered their cargoes of products for the outside markets. Every settlement along the river, almost every farm, provided its own landing, and no consignment of freight was too small to attract the vessel in its course to and from the headwaters of navigation.

Vessels of that day were built for utility only. They were primarily freight carriers, passengers accepting accommodation at their own risk of inconvenience and discomfort. The light draft of the vessels prevented luxurious features of construction, and the sparse settlement along the rivers made them unnecessary. Hard work was the lot of every man engaged in transforming the wilderness into a habitation for man, and every agency he engaged was of necessity but an aid to the universal task. So there was no gay life on the boats that plied the Neches and Angelina rivers, and little gambling such as spread the glamor of romance over the river traffic of the Mississippi in the days of its pristine glory.

Visits of seagoing schooners to the bar at Sabine were few and far between; the transportation of products was a seasonal task, and navigation limited somewhat by the stages of water in the rivers. Hence the one purpose of the masters of vessels was the utmost dispatch in loading, unloading and passage. There was no time for idling among the



crews, and idlers were not welcomed as passengers. It was all work and no play along the docks and on board the boats during that laborious period of development of transportation along the rivers of southeast Texas.

Not only did the material interests of the people depend upon the freight carriers on the rivers, but their cultural advantages were limited to such service as this means of communication could give. There were no telegraphs of course, and mail was their only means of communication with the outside world. The mail service was limited to such as could be supplied by the schooners coming from northern and eastern ports, and until the late fifties none of these ships made Sabine a regular port of call. At that time the Morgan line established a reasonably regular service by routing its schooners by way of Sabine on their way from New Orleans to Galveston and back. Even under this service letters and newspapers were months coming from "back home" to the settlements here, while prior to that time receipt of mail from the outside was listed among the happy accidents of the year.

Crude and laborious though the service was, the energetic and resourceful pioneer transportation kings of that day did their task efficiently. The service they rendered met the requirements of the commerce of the day as adequately as do the in-



comparably greater transport systems of today. American initiative and ingenuity were equal to the problems as they arose and as the demand for transport increased the men engaged in the work found ways to meet it. Larger boats were built, and as they learned the ways of the rivers, they were able to take advantage of the tide stages in the streams, with the result that the cotton grown on the farms along the valleys and later the cattle driven down from the prairies farther inland, were carried to market in ever-increasing quantities from year to year, until the railroad came to relieve the river boats of their task.

The sidewheeler Florida, 250 feet long and "2500 bales" capacity, perhaps the largest of the early river boats, captained by Captain W. E. Rogers, brought to this port the first consignment of iron for the Texas and New Orleans railroad, and much more of such material was brought in by other vessels of the fleet, thus helping toward the construction of the agency which destroyed their own usefulness.

Following the advent of the railroad, river commerce rapidly dwindled, until within a few years the last of the little packets was tied up to a secluded point along the river, there to stay while the speeding locomotives drew its former burdens to other ports, its screeching whistle's note sounding

in the ears of the rivermen like an enemy's battle cry of victory. Like a vanquished host, the river fleet had saluted its conqueror and passed on.

Though long since passed away, river traffic left its impress upon the community, for like all great services to man its works have lived after it. It was this transport system which invited the first efforts toward developing the lumber business along the Neches and Sabine rivers, which has since taken its place as one of the leading industries of the southwest. It was to this industry that Beaumont owed its first commercial importance, and which converted it from a riverside village of 250 population to a town of several thousand people, making it, even in the earlier days, the most important station between New Orleans and Galveston. The development of the enterprise was comparatively rapid, beginning in the early sixties with the manufacture of shingles by hand. Later small mills were established along the streams, their output exported by way of the river fleet; and with the coming of the railroads the industry thus begun, grew rapidly to its present tremendous development.

The harbor of Beaumont in early days included practically the same part of the river which now accommodates the Beaumont city docks and wharves and turning basin, to which come great steel steamships from all ports of the world to carry the

products of the Beaumont district to the markets of every isle and continent. But in lieu of the splendid steel and concrete structures which now greet the masters of the visiting vessels, there were then the crudest of wooden platforms on which cotton, hides, and furs, principal articles of commerce, were piled, and loaded by hand onto the decks of the flat-bottomed vessels tied alongside. These wharves were frequently destroyed by flood waters in the river and as often had to be rebuilt.

Beaumont's harbor of the old sidewheeler days was sixty feet at the end of Main street, and the depth was discovered in an unusual way. A schooner came up from Sabine Pass and was tied at the foot of Main. It was stormy that day and she moved away from the wharf and cast anchor. The anchor caught, and in an attempt to loose it, a sounding was taken. To everybody's surprise, there was sixty feet in the turning basin. It has filled up some since then.

Interesting Neches river history is contained in the little pamphlet entitled "Reminiscences and Suggestions Concerning the Sabine-Neches Project," prepared by Captain William Wiess, Captain W. A. Fletcher, and Captain W. E. Rogers, published in 1910 for the benefit of the United States board of engineers and deep water committee of congress.

Here are extracts from the report of Captain Wiess:

"I herewith submit to you a list of 36 steamboats that operated on the Neches, Angelina, (a tributary of the Neches), and Sabine rivers from 1852 until sometime during the 80's, possibly a few of them until 1890. Most of these boats operated from 1852 up to the close of the war and some of them after the war. Many of them were extra good boats and paid large dividends to their owners; some of them were small and did not succeed very well financially. The capacity is given in bales of cotton:

"Juanita, 400; Angelina, 350; Pearl Plant, 450; Mary Falvey, 450; Sunflower, 600; Dr. Massie, 400; Grand Bay, 600; Era No. 8, 650; Flora, 300; Florida, 2500; Uncle Ben, 900; J. H. Bell, 1200; J. J. Warren, 1400; Emma, 200; J. L. Graham, 400; Cora, 900; Tom Parker, 200; L. C. Lamar, 1400; Pearl Rivers, 1200; Adriance, 200; Stonewall, 600; T. J. Emery, 300; T. J. Smith, 350; Sabine, 450; J. L. Webb, 450; Roebuck, 550; Camorgo, 350; Tug Kate, 75; Pelican State, 150; Orleans, 600; Early Bird, 800; Rough and Ready, 500.

"I desire to say that as I have helped to wear out two steamboats on these rivers, and as I myself have run a 400-bale boat as high up the Angelina river as Pattonia in Nacogdoches county, to Rock-



land on the Neches and to Bellzoria on the Sabine, I feel I am competent to speak on these matters.

“The steamer J. J. Warren, carrying 1400 bales, ran as high up the Angelina river as Townsend’s bluff in the south end of San Augustine county and brought out cotton. She also ran in the Sabine river.

“I have given you the size of these boats that you may know the kind of river trading we had at that time.”



### Naming the Town

THE naming of the Neches river settlement as Beaumont is an incident regarding which there is no reliable record. Even the date at which the christening took place is not known, and legendary accounts vary in detail with reference to the manner in which the name was selected.

That Beaumont received its name as the result of a wager is the statement of Mrs. Pauline Wiess Coffin of Wiess Bluff. Several men gathered under some spreading oaks along the bank of the river, among them being J. Beaumont of Jasper county, and a Mr. Smith. It being agreed that the town had grown large enough to entitle it to a name, it was decided that the winner of a contest should have the distinction of naming the place. Mr. Beaumont won and named the place for himself.

Another account relates that the town was named in honor of a young lady from New Orleans who was a visitor at the time the townsite was surveyed by Henry Millard in 1837 from lands belonging to Tevis, Joseph Grigsby, and a firm of real estate dealers, Pulsifer, Huling and Millard. The young woman so signally honored, Miss Annette Beaumont, later became the wife of Henry Millard, a member of the land firm above referred to.

Thrall's history of Texas states of the naming of the county and city: "Beaumont is the county seat of Jefferson county; both were named for Jefferson Beaumont, who was a leading merchant of Natchez, Mississippi, coming to Texas during the Revolutionary period. He was for several years chief justice of Calhoun county, where he died in 1863."





MRS. LOUANZA CALDER.

## How Beaumont Streets Got Their Names

**B**EAUMONT streets twist and turn like the old part of Boston or New York or New Orleans. The streets lie along the lines of old paths from store to store, from blacksmith shop to station or homes.

In the matter of naming streets a glance at the early maps reveals the fact that the first settlers of Beaumont confined themselves largely to the patriots fresh in their memory, streams that flowed through the then state of Coahuila and Texas, and the trees of the forest. In fact the forests were almost stripped bare of names for streets in the young village that was soon to become a lumber city. Among this list are found ash, beech, cedar, catalpa, cottonwood, cypress, elm, hemlock, pine, plum, spruce and sycamore.

Of the streets named by the original group of pioneers who laid off the town as shown from the first map of the city, the following are listed: Cypress, Travis, Pine, Walnut, Ann, Magazine, Elizabeth, Mulberry, Tevis, Hickory, Main, Pearl, Orleans, Sabine, Neches, Trinity, Jefferson, Cedar, Bonham, Crockett, Bowie, Fannin, Forsythe, Wall, College, Washington, Milam, Franklin and Austin.

Many believe that Railroad avenue is a new street for the convenience of the Kansas City Southern,



but it is the most historical of all, dating back to the sixties. The big planters in east Texas had no railroad connections, and they took their slaves and began the construction of a road from east Texas to Sabine Pass. The road was progressing nicely when the Civil War put a stop to operations. Part of the rails went into Sabine lake, while it is reported that much of the material was carried over a few blocks and became a part of the Sabine and East Texas road. Railroad avenue was the route of the original East Texas-Sabine Pass road.

James H. Rachford has probably named more streets in Beaumont than any other man, when he laid out a number of additions and was instrumental in handling of others. Here is how some of the streets got their names:

Alfred street was named by Judge George C. O'Brien for Alfred John, his nephew, who now lives in Baton Rouge, and who is the son of Alfred S. John, an early mayor of Beaumont.

Alamo was named by Louis Hebert and V. Wiess after the shrine of Texas liberty.

Anderson was named for Glover Anderson.

Amarillo was named after the city of Amarillo in the Panhandle.

Andrus was named for J. D. Andrus who lived in that district and was the father of Tom Andrus.

Archie was named for Archie Holmes, son of J. W. Holmes.

Ashley was named by J. E. Jirou after B. F. Ashley.

Austin was named for Stephen F. Austin, one of the colonizers of Texas, and for whom the state capital is named.

Averill was named after W. C. Averill who married Miss Di Vernon McFaddin, daughter of William McFaddin, and the Averill addition is a part of the headright league of William McFaddin. Barr was named for relatives of Mr. Averill, his oldest son being named Barr Averill.

Blanchette was named for Valerie Blanchette, father of Ed, Hardy, Horace and Coy Blanchette, the late Lee Blanchette, and Mesdames W. L. Thomas, and J. H. Tucker.

Bowie was named for General Bowie of Alamo fame.

Brandon was named for Brandon Chaison, the third son of Jeff Chaison. He was killed when his horse fell on him while rounding up cattle.

Brooklyn was named by Mrs. Stockholm in memory of the native city of her husband.

Brooks was named after former Congressman Lycurgus Brooks, the c having been dropped.

Broussard was named after the Broussard family by O. H. Pennock, Sr. and Sam Potts.

Buford was named by James H. Rachford after Mrs. A. R. Buford, mother of Tom and Frank Buford, Mrs. Ida Barr and the late Mrs. R. W. Waterman. This was formerly the old brickyard road leading to the first industry that came to Beaumont. There was an effort made by the city council to change the name to Green avenue, but it would not stick.

Calder was named for Mrs. Louanza Calder, and for many years was known as Calder road. Old settlers recall hearing Mrs. Calder tell of her trip with Mr. Calder to Beaumont from Port Gibson, Mississippi, making the trip by horseback. Mrs. Calder carried a baby in her arms and a little negro girl rode behind her saddle. The trip went fairly well until they came to Duncan's woods in Orange county, where they were lost for a day and night before they could get their bearings. Mr. and Mrs. Calder had nothing to eat during that time, and the baby and little negro girl were given some starch that they happened to have in saddle bags.

Caldwell in the Averill addition was named for Mrs. W. P. H. McFaddin, whose maiden name was Caldwell, she being the daughter of the late J. L. Caldwell of Huntington, West Va., capitalist and city builder.

Carroll was named by James H. Rachford for George W. Carroll.

Church street was formerly Yankee Doodle street and part of it is still known by that name.

College street was named by the original promoters of the town of Beaumont, the present site of the high school being set aside and so designated for that purpose.

Collier's Ferry takes its name from the road of that name. A ferry first started in 1831 has been operated continuously since that time.

Corley was named for Robert Corley, and Coward for Jack Coward.

Crockett was named after David Crockett, who gave up his life in the Alamo.

Doucette was named for Al Doucette by I. D. Polk and Dewey was christened shortly after the battle of Manilla bay for the American admiral.

Emmett was named by Mr. Rachford for Emmett Langham.

Elizabeth was named by the original plotters of the city and was probably for some lady living in this section of the practically unsettled district.

Fletcher was named for Colonel William A. Fletcher, one of Beaumont's prominent pioneers, whose influence will long be felt in the life of the community.



Forsythe was named for John Forsythe, American statesman, who was secretary of state from 1831 to 1844.

Franklin was named for Benjamin Franklin.

Gladys was named for Gladys City, which is a part of Spindletop. Gladys City was named for Miss Gladys Bingham, now Mrs. J. Bain Price.

Herring was named by Mr. Rachford for J. J. Herring. It was the first wide street in Beaumont, being 80 feet from curb to curb.

John was named for Miss Irma John, now Mrs. Amos K. Gordon of Baton Rouge, granddaughter of the late Captain George W. O'Brien.

Keith street was named for John W. Keith, pioneer, and father of Robert, Henry, Jim and Will Keith.

Liberty was named for Liberty road, which led from Beaumont to the city of Liberty when Houston was a village.

Market was named such by reason of the early organizers dedicating a block of ground thereon for a market house. This block is now occupied by the City Hall.

McFaddin keeps green the memory of the McFaddin family, one of the early and prominent pioneer connections here. The home of W. P. H.



McFaddin is on this street, which passes through his father's headright league.

Orange was named for the city of Orange. It was formerly Bibb, having been named for D. A. Bibb.

Sabine Pass took its name from the old road to Sabine Pass. Until not many years ago Park street was known as Sabine.

Milam was named in honor of Ben Milam, who was killed in the Texas war for independence. When San Antonio was besieged he shouted: "Who will go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio?" The whole army volunteered, but he selected a picked few and went into the city.

### Homes of Early Days

**T**HE history of a people is told by its houses and by its household goods. The day of the prairie schooner and the westward migration, of the log cabin and the struggling settlement, of new importations, and modern success, each of these phases in the development of the section has had its silent representative in the architecture of Beaumont homes.

How well Beaumont pioneers built for future generations is shown in some of the houses erected almost a century ago that are still being used by descendants of those same pioneers. Such a home is that of Mrs. Pauline Wiess Coffin at Wiess Bluff on the Neches river, built in the fall of 1858 by her father, Simon Wiess, and a description of that residence is an accurate picture of the early homes of the Beaumont settlers.

The house is situated on a bluff overlooking the Neches on two sides, with a porch 75 feet long, extending its length. A bannister railing is attached by hooks to the gallery, so that it may be let down and used as a shelf for airing mattresses, blankets and quilts. At one end and entirely separate except for a covered passage, are the dining room and kitchen.

The house has six large rooms, built on either side of a great hall, in addition to kitchen, dining room

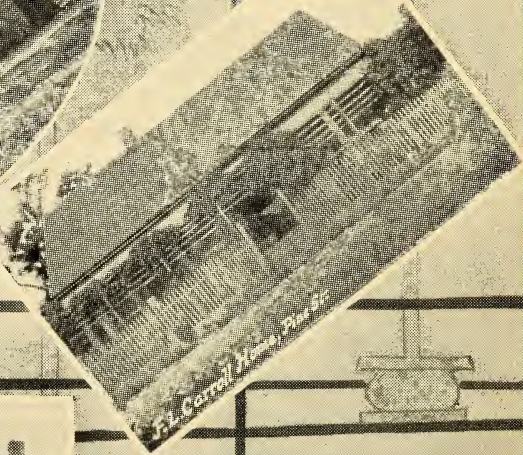




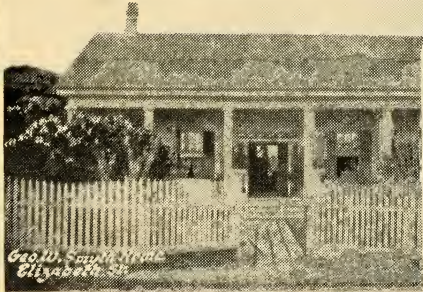


*Simon Wiess Home*

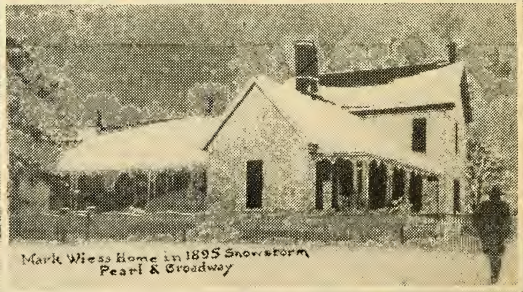
*Wm. M. Fadden Home  
M. Fadden & Fournell*



*St. Carol Home, Beaumont*



*Geo. W. Smith Home  
Elizabeth St.*



*Mark Wiess Home in 1895 Snowstorm  
Pearl & Broadway*



and two store rooms. A den flanked with stuffed animals that were killed at the Bluff is an interesting feature; then, too, there is the old wooden bucket with cover and gourd, that is kept filled with water from one of the three cisterns on the place that contains cooler water than the others.

Old-fashioned heavy beds, with testers, marble-topped tables, a grandfather's clock, walnut high-boys, tall glass candle shades to keep the wind from blowing out the lights, are some of the prize possessions of this home.

The flower garden, quaint and orderly, has been retained practically as it was originally planned. All the walks are bordered by yellow stone quart bottles that came from abroad, and massive liveoak trees shade the yard. Pink crepe myrtle, red roses, gladioli and bachelor button flaunt their loveliness in the old-fashioned garden that radiates an air of romance of bygone days.

A builder's contract of the early period will also give an idea of the type, size and cost of houses in that day. Such a contract made between William E. Hatton and William Stephenson on April 29, 1841, specifies that Hatton is to build a house of the following dimensions, to wit, a frame one and one-half story high, 18 feet wide and 26 feet long with galleries, 10 feet wide on two sides; and the price of Hatton's work, including his furnishing

700 feet of plank, is \$550. Hewn cypress timber was to be used in the construction of the home, with cypress shingles for roofing, and four doors with batten shutters, nine windows with five having batten shutters were to be put in.

By far the greater number of the dwelling houses of this period of Beaumont's history, however, were log houses chinked with mud, and practically all consisted of two large rooms erected on either side of a wide hall left open at the ends, so that the Gulf breeze could sweep through, with a mud chimney built to accommodate eight to ten foot log heaps. One early settler, Mrs. R. N. Weber, recalls seeing cattle break and run through the open hallway of the home of young Noah Tevis, located about where Pipkin park now is, while the family was entertaining guests.

The material for the log houses cost little or nothing except the labor in cutting and preparing the timbers. "Log raisings" were very popular in those days, and it, was only a matter of a few hours with the two teams racing against each other, to heave the logs in place, chink the crevices with mud, and have the house completed with the exception of the chimney and the roof. The latter was made from cypress split shingles, and a swarming crew soon finished it.

Then came the sport of chimney daubing. Four poles as long as the chimney was to be high, were

set upright where the four corners of the completed chimney would come. Holes were drilled every three or four inches in these poles, allowing numerous cross sticks to be inserted, joining all of the poles together and having the appearance of rungs in a ladder. When the chimney frame was completed the "mud cat" was introduced.

The "mud cat" was a composite mass of grey moss and mud, about two inches thick, four to six inches wide, and as long as the distance between the upright poles. The moss was in the center with a thick coating of mud. As each man finished a "mud cat" he heaved it to the man on the chimney. The "cats" were hung across the horizontal sticks, half on either side. Beginning on the bottom rung, each "cat" overlapped the one immediately below it. They were then plastered with mud, inside and out, to prevent the moss from igniting after the heat of the fire had dried it out.

Now most of the old houses are gone. Few traces are left. Where they stood so bravely, landmarks for travelers by land and water, gigantic steel skeletons tower toward the sky, and modern mansions of stone and brick, the homes of the descendants of those hardy pioneers, line the same streets where once stood their modest homes. Like those who lived and loved and moved within their walls, the old homes are gone.

### The First Cotton in Texas

**T**HOUGH most of the early settlers raised cattle, paying little attention to soil cultivation, it was in Jefferson county that the first cotton in Texas was raised. In 1834 Joseph Grigsby came to the county from Green River, Kentucky, and located his league on the Neches river at Grigsby Bluff, now Port Neches. Here he planted and raised the first cotton ever grown in the state. Joseph Grigsby was one of the wealthiest men of the section, owning about fifty slaves, and he was a member of the company that laid out the town of Beaumont.

Joseph Grigsby's daughter, Miss Frances Grigsby, married George W. Smyth, one of the early prominent men of the section, who lived at Smith Bluff now the site of the Pure Oil Refinery. They rode seventy-five miles to Nacogdoches on horseback to be married by a priest. Dr. Joe Smith, a descendant of this couple, has in his possession a prized little kid glove, the picture of which is here reproduced in actual size. Following the custom of the day, dating probably from the ancient custom of ladies presenting their knights with tokens, Frances Grigsby made this dainty little glove as a love token for George W. Smyth. He carried it with him always, and after his death Mrs. Smyth used the little glove as a case for their two wedding rings.







A LOVE TOKEN.

Mr. Smyth took an active part in public affairs of this section and state. He served under the Mexican government as surveyor and commissioner of titles, was a delegate to the convention that declared Texas an independent state, and was one of the signers of the Texas declaration of independence. When Texas became a republic President M. B. Lamar appointed him to run the boundary line between the Republic of Texas and the United States, and he was later elected second land commissioner of the state. He also served as first congressman from the East Texas district, serving two years, and was a member of the convention for the reinstating of Texas into the Union following the Civil War. Mr. Smyth was ill when this convention was called, but having been chosen by the people to represent them, he refused to let his illness keep him from attending the convention. He died while in attendance and is buried in the state cemetery at Austin.

An index to other early settlers of the town is shown in the minutes of the county court of May 31, 1837, listing the names of all citizens who were land-owners and subject to jury service in the county at that time. Thomas Brenan was clerk of the court, William Stephenson sheriff, and G. A. Patillo an associate justice.

The list of all citizens who were free-holders and subject to act as jurors included:

James Stephenson, William T. Hatton, C. C. P. Welsh, R. Ballue, Uriah Gibson, Joseph Ritchie, Isaac Garner, Uriah Harris, D. St. Clair, Gilbert Stephenson, James Dyson, Elisha Stephenson, Marmaduke Hatton, David Harmon, William Hays, Elisha Allen, William Clark, John Blanc, Charles Myers, James Simmons, William Hatton, Jr., James Wan, James Jett, John Harmon, Elijah Allen, Clair-born West, A. Jett, Wilson Sill, John Townsend, Benjamin Johnson, William McFaddin, David Garner, Stephen Simmons, Robert Hatton, Thomas Rowe, Jacob Garner, Charles Crow, W. D. Smith, John Stephenson, Abraham Winfrey, B. Arthur, John Cole, W. H. Irion, John Caruthers, Clark Beach, George Allen, Silas Parmer, Joseph Young, N. Holbert, J. T. Robison, Peyton Blanc, Thomas Heart, Charles Cohorn, S. N. Mathies and Aaron Allen.

These fifty-six constituted the majority of the citizens of the county at this date, and the county at this time included what is now Jefferson, all of Orange and part of Hardin county also.



### The Acadians

*"This is the forest primeval. The murmuring pines  
and the hemlock*

*Bearded with moss and in garments green, indistinct  
in the twilight*

*Stand like Druids of eld, with voices sad and prophetic."*

The marriage agreement had been signed, elaborate preparations were on for the wedding of Gabriel Lajeunesse and Evangeline Bellafontaine in the Acadian village of Grand Pre in 1755. In the midst of the festivities an order came from Governor Charles Laurence for all the men of the little French settlement to gather for a conference with English officials in the village church on a certain day. When the men were assembled, doors of the church were barred and the officials announced that the Frenchmen were their prisoners.

Outside the church the women and children of the parish waited patiently for news from the conference. Darkness came on and when the men did not come from the church, sadly the women went to their homes, at a loss to understand the proceedings.

On the morning of the fifth day, English soldiers opened the church doors, and marched the prisoners down to ships which had been riding at anchor in

the harbor, hurried them aboard and sent them from their native land. Wives were torn from husbands in the confusion, parents were put on separate boats from their children.

With the anxious group who gathered when the church doors were opened was Evangeline, promised bride of Gabriel. Halfway down to the water she greeted and bade farewell to her lover with the memorable words:

*"Be of good cheer for if we love one another  
Nothing in truth can harm us, whatever mischances  
may happen."*

And Gabriel was hurried to one of the boats, leaving Evangeline on the shore with her father, ill and inconsolable. During the night her father died, and doubly bereft, the distraught maiden witnessed the burning of the village and shortly afterward set out with Father Felician, the faithful priest of the parish, to search for Gabriel.

After undergoing many hardships and sufferings, some of the Acadians, expelled by the English, settled in Cape Breton, others in distant Louisiana. And it was to Louisiana that Gabriel had found his way. And to that far southern country journeyed Father Felician and Evangeline, Evangeline seeking her lover, the priest his lost flock.

Finally in the Louisiana settlement they found Basil, Gabriel's father. But Gabriel, restless, too,

had left the day before they arrived to trade for furs with the Indians in the Ozark mountains. Evangeline, not satisfied to wait for his return, persuaded his father, Basil, to accompany her and they started forth to find him.

Many times they spoke with those who had seen and known Gabriel. Once Evangeline heard the splash of the oars of Gabriel's boat as they passed on the broad bosom of the Mississippi, unaware of the nearness one to the other. But long searching proved in vain.

Years passed and Evangeline became a sister of mercy in Philadelphia, never completely giving up hope of being reunited with her lover, and looking daily for him among the stranger faces that she passed in the city.

While going about her deeds of mercy at an almshouse among the dying smallpox patients, she, an old woman, found her lover.

Let Longfellow complete the story:

*"Still stands the forest primeval; but far away from  
its shadow  
Side by side, in their nameless graves, the lovers are  
sleeping.  
Under the humble walls of the little Catholic church-  
yard,  
In the heart of the city they lie, unknown and unnoticed.*

*Daily the tides of life go ebbing and flowing beside  
them,  
Thousands of throbbing hearts, where theirs are at rest  
and forever,  
Thousands of aching brains, where theirs no longer  
are busy,  
Thousands of toiling hands, where theirs have ceased  
from their labors,  
Thousands of weary feet, where theirs have completed  
their journey."*

Thus Longfellow gives the tragedy of one of the group of expelled Acadians. And in Louisiana in the quaint and historic town of St. Martinsville, in the middle of one of the principal streets, stands to this day "Evangeline's Oak" where Longfellow's heroine is supposed to have sat in saddened meditation over her elusive lover.

Far back in 1713 by the treaty of Utrecht the English were given Acadia, or Nova Scotia, but the native French settlers never were made into loyal English subjects. They professed themselves to be French neutrals, but naturally their sympathies were with their kindred in Canada, and they could not altogether be suppressed whenever conflict promised between France and England. At the outbreak of the old French war of 1755 it was decided to expel them from the English soil. The forceable removal of this people from their home, so touchingly de-



scribed by Longfellow in his *Evangeline*, was the final chapter of the story.

With this band of Acadians from the far distant country came the Hebert family to Louisiana. One, Louis Hebert, whose descendants live in Beaumont, was born during the stress of the expulsion. His grandchildren, Martin, Ben B., Will, Louis and Mrs. Mary Azema Hamshire, have been factors in the community. The first three named are still living (1925). Listed in the archives of Louisiana among the chiefs of the Acadian groups were also the Broussards, whose descendants live here.

And the Blanchette, Jirou, Bordages, Chaison and other French families also have played an important part in the building of the city and county.

### The Black Bean

**F**EW of the major events of early Texas history found missing from the roster of participants the name of one or more of the Beaumont pioneers, and the little settlement on the Neches gave a number of martyrs to the cause of Texas independence.

To the Ogden family, perhaps, fell the most trying and tragic experience of which there is personal record in the archives of the early days, when James Ogden fell before the murderous fire of Mexican executioners at Mier, one of the seventeen members of the ill-fated expedition who drew a black bean.

Students of Texas history will remember that incident in the long list of somber tragedies of which devoted Texas patriots were victims during the several struggles with Santa Anna, who, though vanquished, never quite lost hope of again possessing the rich territory wrested from him by Houston and his little band; of how General Adrian Woll, Mexican general with 1200 men, invaded Texas, marched upon San Antonio and captured it; how 200 soldiers finally repulsed Woll who retreated from San Antonio.

Before the echoes of the bugles which sounded General Woll's retreat had finally died on the air, volunteers came flocking to San Antonio eager to pursue him, and on November 18, 1842, seven

hundred men under the leadership of Alexander Somerville had assembled there armed and equipped for a campaign. After several days' march they camped at Laredo, and planned to cross into México and take the enemy by surprise. But an order was given by General Somervell to return to Gonzales where they would be disbanded. The men were dumfounded. Three hundred flatly refused to obey the order, and with this group Captain William S. Fisher was elected colonel in command, and the expedition proceeded down the Rio Grande opposite the Mexican town of Mier. Of this band was James Ogden, who, with his brother, Frederick Ogden, had come to Beaumont to settle in 1840.

On Christmas morning Colonel Fisher led his men across the river to meet the Mexican troops, 2000 strong, under the command of General Ampudia. By daylight the Texans had captured the enemies' cannon and cut their way into the town, where the fight went on, hand to hand, from street to street, from house to house. The fight lasted for seventeen hours, at the end of which time a flag of truce was sent by General Ampudia to Colonel Fisher. Fisher had been severely wounded early in the action. He was weakened by loss of blood and unnerved by pain, and he advised surrender, although to this time his men had been victorious. He knew the Mexican general he said, and answered for his good faith. After much discussion the majority of men

agreed to the surrender, and the terms were drawn up. No sooner were the articles signed and the Texans's arms stacked than the unfortunate prisoners began to suffer from the cruelty of their treacherous foes. They were put in irons and marched to Matamoras, thence to the interior. On their arrival in Salado they were met by an order from Santa Anna. Every tenth man was to be shot!

One of their own number who could read Spanish was made to interpret the order to the men, and amid the deadly stillness following the reading of the awful decree an officer entered the shed where they were confined, carrying an earthen jar containing 175 beans. Seventeen of the beans were black, the others white. The jar was placed on a bench and a handkerchief thrown over it. The roll was then called. Each prisoner stepped forward as his name was called, placed his hand in the jar and drew a bean.

The black beans in this fatal lottery meant death. It was Sunday afternoon, just as the church bells were everywhere calling the people to vesper prayer when this fearful drama began. Not one of the actors in it faltered or changed color at finding in his hand the token of death. When the ordeal was ended the shackles of the seventeen doomed men were knocked off, they were hurried to a yard adjoining the shed and shot without ceremony, while



their comrades crouched against the wall within, heard their whispered prayers, the echoing shots, the dying groans.

James Ogden was one of the doomed ones, and in a letter sent to his mother in Kentucky, are given the last words of the martyr. This letter is the property of his niece, Mrs. Viola Johnson of Beaumont.

“New Castle, Kentucky,  
“June 17, 1843.

“Dear Sister:

“I avail myself of the present opportunity to inform you that we received the last words of James since you were here. I send you a copy verbatim:

“ ‘THE LAST WORDS OF OGDEN

“ ‘Clay, tell my friends that I die a Christian, thanks to Meriwether, a Methodist preacher. He has been my guide to heaven and he is my friend. He stripped to clothe me, he starved that I might eat. He is a relation of your neighbors.

“ ‘Tell my father I wish my old friend Crouch to preach a sermon to my friends for me and tell them I wish them all to meet me in heaven. Tell my sisters I wish them to meet me in heaven. Tell my mother not to grieve for me, for the friend that I love is with me and my God will not forsake me. Give my love to all, to Mrs. Meriwether’s family,

and Old Crouch and tell them all to meet me in heaven. To Meriwether I am indebted for the favor of dying with my hands untied. Farewell, all farewell.'

"It was inclosed in a letter from Clay, a fellow prisoner who was released. Clay wrote that Meriwether was taken as a spy by the Mexicans but proved himself to be a Methodist minister. He wrote that Meriwether carried James on his horse and would not let the guard strike him. He wrote that James died bravely and religiously and was buried by Meriwether. He said Meriwether died of fever ten days after the execution and I devoutly hope their redeemed spirits have met and been reunited in a better world than this. James M. Ogden was not easily deceived and let us remember and cherish and labor to comply with his last request 'Tell my sisters to meet me in heaven.' I have looked carelessly on these things but shall never do it again.

"In compliance with the request of James, Mr. Crouch will preach a funeral sermon in the Baptist church in New Castle on the second Sabbath in September.

Elizabeth S. Ogden."

The letter came by devious routes, reaching the family about six months after the death of the martyr.





IN CASE OF INDIANS.



As already mentioned, James Ogden, victim of Mexican cruelty, with his elder brother Frederick, came to Beaumont from Kentucky about the year 1840, making the trip in a wagon. The brothers settled on 20 acres of land near the center of which is the present site of the Pennsylvania school building. Here they cleared a home site among the great oaks that covered the land and built a large log house, planted pecan trees, which still stand there, and otherwise made ready the new home for Frederick's wife and son, who had remained in Kentucky. Then Frederick journeyed back to the old state and brought his family to Texas, coming down the Mississippi in a boat, thence by schooner across the gulf to Sabine and up the Neches to Beaumont.

Frederick Ogden was a college graduate in both law and medicine, and among other activities practiced both professions here. His brother James, unmarried, ventured farther in search of adventure and became a member of the fatal Mier expedition, whose story is told in the preceding pages.

Mrs. Viola Johnson, daughter of Dr. Frederick Ogden, is one of Beaumont's oldest native daughters. To Frederick Ogden and his wife were born four children, Lemuel P., Ed, William and Viola.

Mrs. Johnson recalls many stirring incidents on the frontier, and relates that "living under the bed" in hiding from the Indians was a frequent expedient

of the children of that day. Indians, she relates, were then encamped in numbers on Spindletop and the whites lived in constant dread of an outbreak or of sporadic maraudings by small squads of the tribe. She still has in her possession a dagger which her father gave her mother as a means of protection from the Indians.

Both Dr. and Mrs. Ogden died during the childhood of Viola and her brothers, and the children returned to Kentucky to make their home with relatives. At the age of 16 young Lem Ogden ran away from home and joined the Confederate forces, remaining with the army till the close of the war, at which time he came back to Beaumont, established his claim to the 20 acres of land owned by his father and uncle.

Here he was joined later by his brother, Ed, and here he married Miss Cyntheal McClure.

For several years, states Mrs. Ogden, who still lives in Beaumont, the brothers worked in sawmills at a wage of 50 cents a day, eventually receiving the maximum wage for such work, \$1 per day. Finally tiring of such ill-compensated work, the two saved a sufficient sum to purchase one large cypress log. From this log, laboring side by side, they sawed and split a cargo of shingles which they traded in Corpus Christi. From this modest and laborious beginning came the founding of one of the town's leading families.





LONGVILLE LEARNED ITS 3 R'S HERE.



### Boy Feud

THE lot of the children of the pioneers was as far removed from that of the boys and girls of the present day as was that of their elders, and as the tasks and duties of their parents differed from those of the Beaumonter of today, so did their youthful pastimes and pleasures differ from the games in well-ordered parks and school grounds, visits to the movies and other recreations provided for children of the twentieth century.

Of toys there were none, save the crudest make-shifts made by hand at home; no paved streets and sidewalks whereon boys and girls might glide swiftly on roller skate or bicycles, but in their stead rough pathways through the forest or across the prairies, over which they galloped astride stick horses carrying guns fashioned from boards, in search of "wild game" or "Indians", in make-believe copies of their fathers' own recreations or duties.

In games of earlier days the military spirit prevailed. That brought about naturally the organization of companies or squads, for without opposing armies there could be no battles. Out of this spirit grew eventually a permanent factionalism in which the "town" boys and the "Long and Company" boys were drawn up in loyal ranks in opposing camps.

In the early 80's these companies were made up, on the one hand, of the boys in town, and of those living in the vicinity of the present site of the creosoting plant and attending the school maintained by the Long and Company lumber concern. The dividing line was the present Pine street, beyond which no member of either side dared venture without ample escort for his protection against capture.

These valiant defendants of their respective territories maintained a remarkably well-ordered organization and kept faithful vigil over their domain. Squads of guards were posted at vantage points, and any boy venturing into foreign territory was promptly captured and imprisoned. Emmett Fletcher was the commander of the Longville armies, and his faithful followers tell to this day with no little show of pride the story of the capture of a town boy, who was held incommunicado in the Longville prison, a lonely shack in the outskirts of the settlement, and subjected to torture, consisting of jeers and taunts and dire and dreadful threats by his captors for a day and night.

Should a boy have to come to town on an errand for his mother, he applied to his captain for an escort and a squad of strapping scouts armed to the teeth with wooden swords and guns, was summoned. And the same custom prevailed when it became neces-

sary for a town boy to venture into Longvillian territory. Venturesome ones essayed sometimes to "slip through the ranks" in fine imitation of a regulation spy and completing his business, slip back again with many a trick of strategy that might well stand in hand an adult soldier in times of real war.

Immunity enveloped a boy only when accompanied by father or mother, and even then he was not spared the sly taunts and gibing side talk by "enemy" youngsters, at church, funeral or other gatherings.

Doubtless from the many factional alliances and antagonism that supplied vent for the youthful spirits of the boys of yesteryear grew some of the social lines, business associations and political line-ups of the present day. Certain it is that the vigor with which the boy of that day played his outdoor game, and the loyalty with which he supported his clan, did much toward building up both body and character and contributed to the strength of body and soul of the men whose work was the structure of civilization that now makes the lives of boys and girls a season of ease and pleasure.

Every home in the early days of Beaumont was a schoolhouse, for up to 1881 there was no public school system in the little city and the children's education depended on home teaching or on private

schools. Some of the more prosperous families employed governesses, but by far the greater number of children attended schools conducted by private teachers who charged a small tuition fee per pupil in some instances \$1.50 per pupil per month.

Of these private schools there seem to have been many, and widely scattered. There was a building in a gum thicket where the First National Bank building now stands, a Catholic parochial school in the same block, on the Orleans street side, a school where the Wilson Hardware company now is, one back of the McFaddin homesite, one in a hall in Keith park. Another recalled by many of the present prominent citizens was the Beaumont Academy, which stood in a heavy forest area on Park street, between the double bridges, about where the Turnbow Lumber company now is. Here Professor George H. Stovall, assisted by Rev. William McFaddin Alexander, taught in the early eighties. Many Beaumonters got their three R's at a little schoolhouse four miles west of Beaumont on the Calder road sixty-five years ago, and now on each July 4 there is a reunion of the pupils of that school, who gather under the same spreading oaks where they romped in childhood. It's a far cry from the present-day ride in limousine to the walk of the yesteryear over plowed fields to that tiny crude building.



Under the charter provisions of 1881 Beaumont organized a city system of schools, and in 1884 purchased the old firemen's hall and negro Odd-fellows hall for \$567.50 for school buildings. Five white and three negro teachers were employed.

The schools were for the first year under the direction of a temporary superintendent, Rev. Thomas Ward White, then H. E. Chambers. In 1885 W. H. Fonte was elected superintendent in August and resigned in October. The management of the schools was then placed under the principals of the white and negro schools, and this management was continued until 1889, when C. F. Johnson was made superintendent. In 1890 by popular subscription and bond issue, the North End (now Millard) school was built. Up to this time there were only seven grades in the schools, and in that year an eighth grade was added. In 1892 C. A. Bryant was elected superintendent and served two years. He added the tenth grade, forming a three-year high school course. He was succeeded by P. A. Dowlen, who served two years. The schools since their organization had been supported by state funds for four and five months each year, and lack of these funds necessitated the closing of the schools during 1896-97.

In March the board resigned in a body because the council refused to order an election for a 25-cent

school tax. A new board was organized in May, and a 25-cent school tax voted June 12, 1897. P. S. Halleck was elected principal of the North End school, and Dr. G. H. Stovall was appointed superintendent without salary. Dr. Stovall resigned the following December and the schools were again placed under the management of the principals. On May 2, 1898, the office of city superintendent was created, with a salary and I. H. Bryant was elected superintendent. He served one month and was succeeded by F. A. Parker, who served three years. He was succeeded by B. F. Pettus who served two years, and Superintendent Pettus was succeeded by H. F. Triplett in 1903, who served 16 years, succeeded in 1919 by M. E. Moore.

In 1902 school building bonds were voted to the amount of \$85,000 with which a \$60,000 high school for whites, and two buildings for negroes were erected in 1904. In 1906 \$30,000 additional bonds for school buildings was voted.

The schools took another leap forward in 1924 when ground was purchased, buildings erected and equipment provided for two junior high schools and two negro schools, a bond issue of \$500,000 having been voted for the purpose.

The enrollment in the schools in 1884 was 427; in 1891, 699; in 1899, 902; in 1900, 1203; in 1901,

1848; in 1903, 2444; in 1907, 3102; and for the beginning of the fall term of 1924, 6266.

As now organized the Beaumont city school system has a high school with a three-year course; two junior high schools with three-year courses; and seven ward schools with the first five grades for whites, and three elementary and one high school for negroes.

Including in its curriculum work from kindergarten through two years' accredited college course, the South Park schools form a distinctive link in the educational system of the city. In 1907 the first bond issue of \$23,000 was voted for a school for the children of the workers in the Spindletop oil fields. In 1913 by a special act of the legislature the school district was made into an independent district, and L. R. Pietzsch was made superintendent. From that period to the present year the school system has been enlarged until it now includes the South Park junior college, built in 1923, high school, elementary school and a kindergarten, with a school for negroes. Only three schools in Texas claim the distinction of a public school system covering that period of years. Drawing taxes from the Magnolia refinery, the school is one of the richest independent districts in the world.

### The Alligator Circuit

**F**OLLOWING closely after the settlement and leading lives as romantic as they were useful, came the pioneer ministers of the little village on the Neches. Long before there were any church buildings, these faithful servants of the people were at work, their fields of service extending far beyond the confines of the home or building, where they held meetings, for they were physicians, newspapers and lawyers, offering advice on the myriad problems that confronted the pioneer family. The parishes were measured in leagues, and the visits of the ministers were real events in the lives of every member of the family.

As early as 1824 the spiritual welfare of the people of this section was being planned. In the Mexican decrees of colonization of January, 1824, under which de Zavalla's colony was organized, one of the provisions made was that the government should take care that the new towns formed "be provided with a sufficient number of spiritual pastors for their support."

Beaumont was served early in its history by missionaries and circuit riders. The Catholic missionaries were sent out from Galveston, and the first circuit for ministers was called the Alligator circuit.



Riding from Nacogdoches south to the coast, east to the boundary line of the state, and west as far as the Trinity, Rev. Daniel Morse, a native Tennessean, in 1877 was named Methodist minister for the Alligator district. With so boundless an area to cover, Rev. Morse reached his charges only once in three months, and even then he rode ceaselessly, in winter on horseback over country where in many instances there were no roads, and in summer with his wife in a two-horse rig specially fitted for camping.

Salaries were an uncertain quantity for these early ministers, and as he threaded his way through the marshes of the coastal country, Rev. Morse's thoughts were divided between things spiritual and material, pondering on how he might add to his income, and not neglect the needs of his parishioners. An alligator floating like a sodden log in nearby water arrested his attention, and suddenly he saw his problem solved. Out came his gun, and the alligator was killed and skinned. Continuing on his way, he killed a number of the reptiles, carrying the skins to the nearest pioneer home, where they were dried. On his return trip through the section Rev. Morse would collect the skins, take them to the nearest market and trade for supplies to carry to his home in Nacogdoches. The practice became a general one with the ministers, and the circuit was named the Alligator circuit. In like manner

during the winter other wild animals were killed as the ministers rode through the country, and the skins dried and sold in the same manner.

These early circuit riders held services in homes, in grog shops, and at cross roads, and throughout the four years of Rev. Morse's service there were no regular church buildings.

Before the building of the first Catholic church in 1881, the community was served by a missionary priest coming out of Galveston, who made the town about once in four weeks. One of these early missionaries, Rev. P. F. Parisot, in a journal kept in 1853-54, writes of a trip from Galveston.

"In the month of February, 1853, I was sent by Bishop Odin to visit Eastern Texas. I had just \$2 in my pocket and a heavy saddle bag containing all articles necessary for the mass and my wardrobe. I went on board a steamer, crossed Galveston bay and paid my fare \$2, landing at Anahuac penniless. I entered the town which contained three houses, the most conspicuous of which was General Chambers's residence. I directed my steps thereto with my heavy saddle bags on my shoulders and met General Chambers on the door steps. 'Good morning, General', said I, 'I am sent by Bishop Odin to visit Eastern Texas. I have no horse, no money and do not know the roads. Can you help me out?' The general advised me to go back to

Galveston for better equipment and money, saying he would pay my fare. 'Much obliged, General, but I think I will take my saddle bag on my shoulders and go ahead,' I answered.

"The general seeing my obstinacy, lent me a big American horse and a colored man to accompany me. We reached a settlement six miles ahead, called Turtle Bayou, where I spent three days. Here they lent me a donkey. It took a whole day to reach the next settlement, fifteen miles distant. En route from there to Beaumont I saw a board stuck in the mud, bearing the following inscription, 'Sour Lake.'

"A few miles below Beaumont I found a Mr. Chiasson, with his numerous family and his father, aged 103 years, who was as deaf as a post. I had to hear the old man's confession half a mile from the house behind a bush he was so deaf. One day I wanted to cross the Neches river, but had spent my last penny for an old horse. I told the ferryman to choose between prayer and preaching for his fee. 'Well, pray for my family,' he answered and invited me to take dinner with him."

Early church meetings in the town of Beaumont were held in the court house, in a school house which was located at the corner of Pearl and Forsythe streets, and many times arbors built of sweet gum boughs in a gum thicket where Hotel Beaumont now stands, and in a clump of oak trees that stood on the square at the corner of Park and Emmett.

People came from miles around to listen to the sermon in those days. After the services had ended friends and neighbors gathered in groups to discuss the news of the day. At this time invitations were given to weddings, missionary meetings, and family gatherings of all kinds. If a man intended to build a new barn he invited his friends to assist at the "raising" and to remain after the work for a feast and frolic; or perhaps his wife invited friends for a quilting, which was always followed by a general good time.

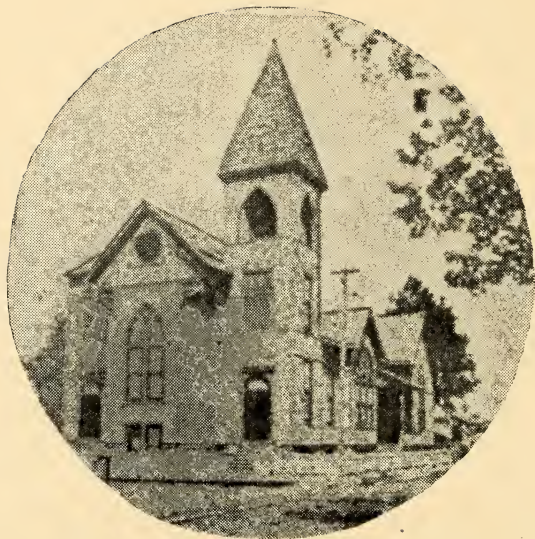
While the men discussed the affairs of the nation and predicted the result of the next election, the women exchanged cooking recipes and talked over household topics. After the morning sermon there was a basket luncheon spread nearby and the people remained for the afternoon service.

In those early days the people were not divided into so many denominations, and the Baptists and Methodists together built the first church building in the town, where the T. S. Reed grocery company is located, and combined their services until they had buildings of their own, the Methodists retaining the same location for some time.

Rev. John F. Pipkin was the first resident minister of which there is a record for the town of Beaumont. Rev. Pipkin came to southeast Texas in 1852, and stopped for a short time at Wiess Bluff, then settled







WHERE EARLY METHODISTS WORSHIPPED.

in Duncan's Woods in Orange county. From that place he came over to Beaumont to hold services in the old courthouse building that stood on the same square where the present courthouse is.

Rev. Pipkin moved to Beaumont about 1859 and continued to hold services at the old courthouse for several years. He married and buried Methodist, Baptist and Catholic couples in those days, and whenever a priest came through the Catholics would have their marriages blessed to conform to the rites of their own church.

### The Late Train

A TRAIN that is late one hour in these modern days is considered quite hopeless. But Beaumont has the record of once having a train roll in two years, one month, twenty-seven days, five hours and fifteen minutes behind the time scheduled for its arrival.

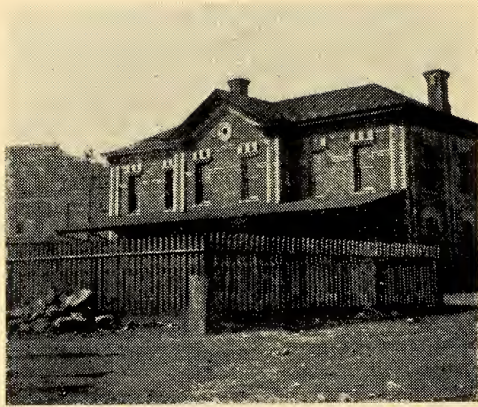
In 1895 Colonel L. P. Featherstone built the Gulf and Interstate from Beaumont to Bolivar Point.

In 1900 the Galveston storm swept over that section, destroying the line from the vicinity of High Island to Bolivar point. The road was not rebuilt until some two years later, its reconstruction bringing about the most novel incident of railroading in the United States.

A passenger train was standing at Bolivar Point when the storm struck, the waves scattering the steel rails and ties as if they were so much chaff. The train with its locomotives and coaches remained intact, but were separated from the track that remained by several miles of debris. When the rails were again in place steam was gotten up and the train arrived in Beaumont two years, one month, twenty-seven days, five hours and fifteen minutes late.







SOUTHERN PACIFIC DEPOT, PEARL AND CROCKETT.

This road was later acquired by the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe, and is a part of that system today. Colonel Featherstone tried to have the road known as "The Lighthouse Route" but the public insisted on calling it the "Gee Ni" and the name stuck.

Without a single exception all of the great industrial and commercial assets of Beaumont have come by continual pounding, faith in the city and this section of the country and a tenacity on the part of the early builders which thrived on defeat. It took years for the giant pines to shoot skyward and add ring by ring to their trunks until they became saw logs. It took hundreds of tiny rivulets springing from the sand hills of east Texas to converge their combined strength and make the Neches river. The same has been true of all our man-made assets. It took years to correct a defect in nature and connect the waters of the Neches river with the gulf in such a manner that ships from the seven seas might tie up at Beaumont. It took years to develop the saw mill industry from sheds where shingles were made by hand to the modern band mills cutting up to 200,000 feet a day. It took years to get a hole down to the cap rock on Spindletop and unloosen the liquid gold that had been awaiting the needs of an advancing civilization.

The same is true of railroads entering Beaumont. They bring with them a breath of the old south, for

they passed through the war between the states, with disastrous results, lay dormant through the poverty-stricken years of reconstruction and succumbed again to the mighty waves of the Gulf of Mexico—real industrial tragedies if tragedies may be made of steel.

From the best information obtainable, the first effort to build a railroad in Beaumont came from rich planters who would connect their plantations and forests with the open sea through the use of rails. Shallow draft boats from Sabine Pass skipped across Sabine Lake and up the Neches river to Nacogdoches county, but this did not give the planters some distance from the river, satisfactory service. The miles of marsh land between Beaumont and Sabine Pass without roads were also a factor in encouraging railroad building.

These planters conceived the idea of building a railway from Sabine Pass into Hardin county, no doubt dreaming of reaching some of the oldest settled sections of the state in the vicinity of Jasper, Burkville, San Augustine, Nacogdoches or Livingston. Whatever their ultimate object, the dream passed away with them.

There were many slave-owners in East Texas, and the negroes were pressed into service to build the road. The general nature of the ground was flat, and this made heavy cuts and dumps unnecessary.



The road passed through what was then the west end of the city, and Railroad avenue took its name from the old dump thrown up by the slaves. It has been handed down by tradition that construction was held up for several days until the negroes could recover from the effect of a sudden change in diet. Wheat was not raised in south Texas, with the result that all bread, except on special occasions at the homes of the well-to-do planters, was made of corn meal. Getting to Beaumont, where freight was brought in by water from the north, they were given wheat bread to eat. Something bordering on an epidemic resulted, and no work was done until the slaves were again given their accustomed hoe cakes.

This railroad started in 1859 and was known as the Sabine and Eastern Texas railway company. Rails were laid from Hardin county as far south as where Port Arthur now stands, in the drive toward Sabine Pass. The terminus at Taylor's bayou was called Aurora. War clouds brought about by the servitude of the slaves like those building the railroad, put a stop to further construction. The planters and their sons able to bear arms started on their way to Chickamauga, Vicksburg, Bull Run, Chancellorsville, and Gettysburg. The steel rails were left to bleach in the sun, while their thoughts were turned to the outcome of the battle. With slaves gone, their plantations reduced to a wilder-

ness of undergrowth, and no funds, the planters had to give up the task.

In 1881 the Kountze interests, who owned most of the land in the vicinity of Sabine Pass and many thousands of acres in East Texas, took the old rails to help build the Sabine and East Texas from Sabine Pass through Beaumont to Rockland. It was placed in operation in 1883. It was purchased in 1905 by the Southern Pacific and extended to Dallas, its present terminus. The tropical hurricane of 1885 sent the Gulf of Mexico inland to the vicinity of Taylor's bayou and when the waves had subsided it was found that the rails had been twisted as so many reeds and that section of the road had to be rebuilt.

About the same year the planters started their line, 1859, a right-of-way was secured through Beaumont by the Sabine and Galveston Bay railway and lumber company. In 1860 the name of this road was changed to the Texas and New Orleans. It was constructed from Sabine river to Houston. No bridge had been built across the Neches river, which made it necessary to transfer passengers, baggage and freight across the stream by ferry and load again on the other side. Like the Sabine and Eastern Texas, born in the same year, it succumbed to the ravages of war and felt the trampling feet of reconstruction. It was reorganized in 1874, re-

habilitated, and became a part of the great Southern Pacific transcontinental system that now reaches from the Atlantic to the Pacific. It became a link in one of the great railroad systems of the New World.

In 1896 John Henry Kirby built the Gulf, Beaumont and Kansas City from Beaumont to Kirbyville in Jasper county for the purpose of furnishing an outlet for sawmills in that territory and it was extensively used until a few years ago to haul logs to the saw mills in Beaumont. In 1900 it was acquired by the Gulf, Colorado and Santa Fe. It was extended to Longview on the north with connections out of Silsbee to Somerville on the main line, and a branch from Kirbyville to De Ridder, Louisiana. It became a part of the great Santa Fe system, which blankets the west from a line drawn from Beaumont to Chicago west to the Pacific. Until it passed into the hands of the Santa Fe it was dubbed the "Kay See."

The next railroad to reach Beaumont was the Kansas City, Pittsburg and Gulf, the realization of a dream of Arthur Stillwell to give to Kansas City an airline to the gulf. Tracks were laid from Beaumont to Port Arthur in 1896, trains from Kansas City coming from Lake Charles over the Southern Pacific. A line was later extended from Beaumont to connect with the main line at De-

Quincey, La. This road resulted in the building of the city of Port Arthur, which was an uninhabited prairie at that time. It utilized Railroad avenue in passing through the city, the same dump that had been built by the planters with slave labor in 1859. After passing into the hands of receivers it was re-organized by John W. Gates and the name changed to Kansas City Southern. Under the old name it was dubbed "Pee Gee" but now is called "Kay See."

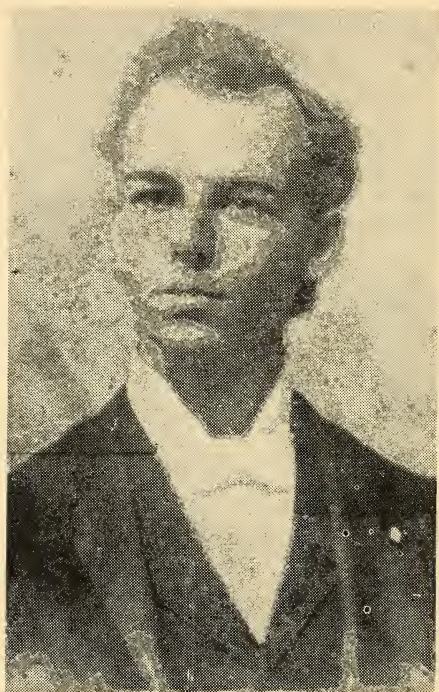
The sixth and last railroad to be built out of Beaumont was the Beaumont, Sour Lake and Western, which had R. C. Duff, now president of the Waco, Beaumont, Trinity and Sabine, as its president. This line was built in 1906 from Beaumont to Sour Lake, which had become a great oil-producing center. It later became a part of the Frisco system under B. F. Yoakum, and when that road went into the hands of receivers, it became a part of the Gulf Coast lines, extending from New Orleans to Brownsville.

In 1923 R. C. Duff purchased two orphan branches of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas between Beaumont and Waco, and is now building these lines to connect with Beaumont on the south and ultimately with Waco on the north.

One of the interesting features about railroad building to Beaumont, is that with the single exception of the Kansas City Southern, all of the great







WHEN R. C. DUFF WAS 21.

railway systems now serving the city were started, so far as Beaumont was concerned, from short lines radiating from the city. The Southern Pacific was brought here as a result of the short line from the Sabine river to Houston, the Santa Fe came as a result of the short line built to Kirbyville by John Henry Kirby, and the Gulf and Interstate to Galveston by L. P. Featherstone. The Gulf Coast is the result of a line approximately 20 miles to Sour Lake.

### Beaumont in the Wars

**B**EAUMONT'S war record is one to which its citizens may point with pride. Beginning with the American Revolution, although this section at that time was still a wilderness over which the Indians roamed, the citizenry of the town has touched every war in the history of the country.

Three Beaumont pioneers were the connecting links with the war for American independence. Captain Robert Kidd, who came to Beaumont in 1849, remembered seeing the army of Cornwallis on its march to defeat in Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781. Colie LeBleu, grandfather of Mrs. Charles J. Chaison and a native of France, came to America with General Lafayette in 1777 to assist the American colonists in the War of Independence. After the close of the war he moved to Louisiana, thence to Beaumont, where he died, and is buried in the old Jirou graveyard.

Jonas Chaison, great grandfather of C. J. Chaison and Mrs. Whitelaw Houk, who died in Beaumont at the age of 110 years, was also a Revolutionary soldier, having come to America with Lafayette. Mr. Chaison fought both in the battles of the American Revolution and in the War of 1812. He received land grants in Louisiana from the government for his services. Mr. Chaison moved to Beau-



mont with his son, McGuire Chaison, and lived here until his death. He is buried in the old Jirou cemetery.

The little settlement was also well represented in the war with Mexico for Texas independence. A company of the settlers of the town of Beaumont was organized and drilled at Santa Anna, about where the Magnolia refinery now stands. Practically all the men in the settlement at that time joined the company, and several local men were in the battle of San Jacinto. Among them were William McFaddin, and J. B. Langham, senior, and George W. Smyth, senior, was on his way to join the army when the battle of San Jacinto ended the war.

G. W. Hargraves, who was captain of a little Beaumont company of militia in August, 1835, had sixty-two men under him, twenty of whom took part in the battle of the Alamo. He also was at the head of twenty-one volunteers who started to join Houston to stop the advance of Santa Anna, but the battle of San Jacinto was fought before they reached that place, and they were ordered to rout some hostile Indians north of the town. Men Mr. Hargraves could remember years after who were in his company, were:

William Clark, ——— Clark, John Coale, ———  
Coale, Bill Ashworth, Aaron Ashworth, Tapler  
Ashworth, Luke Ashworth, Charles Cronier, Elisha

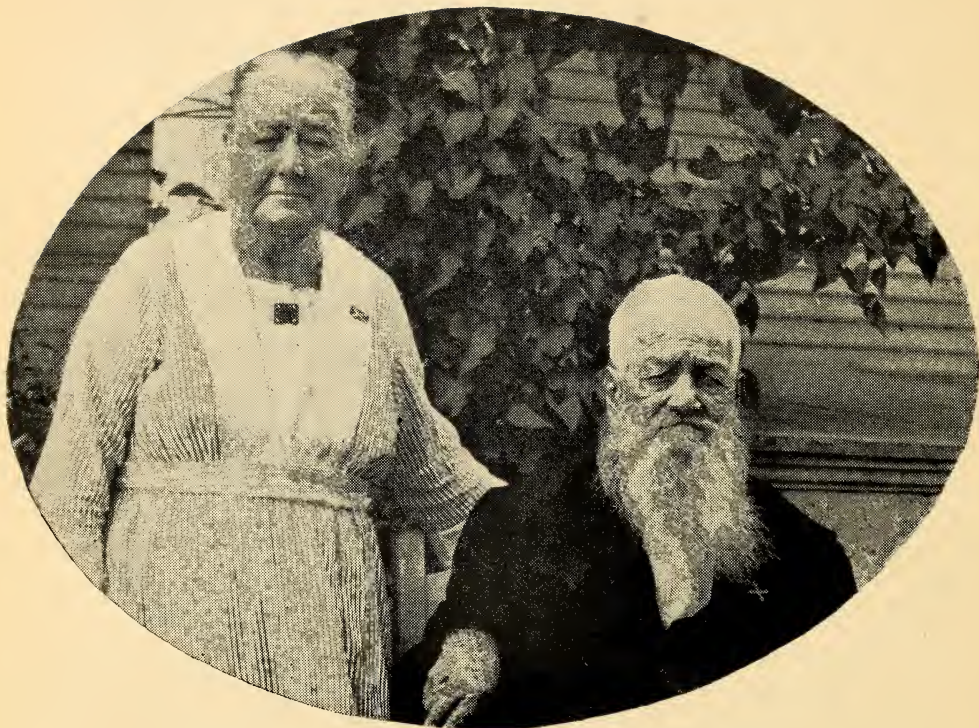
Stephenson, Lige Stephenson, Tom Berwick, Batiste Pevito, Dave Harmon, George Medgar, William Beckham, David Garner, Isaac Garner, Jim McCall, John Allen, — Allen, Joe Linsicomb, Jake Hays, Jim Jett, — Jett, Clark Beach, — Powers, Archie Richie, Wash Tevis, Jack Tevis, — Williams, Tom Yoakum, Jim Foreman and Ben Johnson, and Jim Courts.

How a few men saved the Texas coast from a formidable threatened invasion is a story that Beaumont folk never tire of hearing, not only because it was one of the most gallant achievements of the Civil War, but also because it is their own story.

Sabine Pass, the scene of this battle, is situated in the southern extremity of Jefferson county on the borders of the Sabine Lake, near the head of the old channel of Sabine Pass leading from the gulf into Sabine Lake. At a point a few miles south of the town the battle took place on September 8, 1863, between a federal fleet of 22 vessels and a small mud fort hastily erected on the bank, manned by 41 men under direct command of a young Irishman, Dick Dowling, and defended by half a dozen old cannon which had been salvaged from other battles, repaired and crudely mounted in the fort.

From Joe Chasteen, only known survivor of the operations at Sabine Pass, comes a graphic account of the battle. While Beaumont was military head-





MR. AND MRS. JOSEPH CHASTEEN.



quarters for this section, and many of the members of the small troop were recruited from the town, Mr. Chasteen was then a resident of Sabine Pass, at that time the head of deep water navigation, and the second town of importance in the county. Capture of that point would have made the federals masters of all the southeastern section of the state of Texas. Mr. Chasteen, now a resident of Beaumont, gives an authentic, detailed account of the battle and its results as follows:

"I was not lucky enough to be one of the immortal forty-one within the fort when the battle was fought. I was with 150 other troops, aboard a small boat, the Uncle Ben, some distance up the lake when the firing began. We had just landed at Sabine, where Captain Odium, commander of the Sabine forces, had gone before the Yankees put in their appearance.

"Hearing the firing, Captain Odium ordered me to get as many men as possible and hurry back to the assistance of those in the fort. Dick Dowling, a second lieutenant, was in command of the remnant of our forces left there. We made all speed possible, but before we arrived the firing ceased and we thought it was all up with Dick and his little band.

"Approaching cautiously, we were amazed to see the fort still intact, two of the Yankee vessels

floundering helplessly in the lake, another badly disfigured limping away down the channel, and in the distance the whole proud armada of Yankee ships scuttling for the open sea in full retreat.

“We made for the nearer and larger of the federal ships, the Clifton, and there found ‘the kid’, Dick Dowling, and half a dozen of his men aboard taking possession of the vessel and disarming the crew. We right heartily responded to his call for help in that work and within a short while we had landed 500 men from the Clifton and Sachem, the two disabled vessels, and started them on their way to Beaumont as prisoners of war.

“From the men who actually took part in the battle we learned that the enemy fleet had sailed into the pass early in the morning. The flagship, the Clifton, with the Yankee commander aboard, steamed haughtily on until it came broadside to and practically under the very shadow of the little mud fort behind whose walls Dowling and his forty men were awaiting the right moment to touch off the old cannon and open battle.

“The Sachem followed close behind and anchored a short distance from the Salem, while the Arizona, another of the armed convoy, stood farthest out from the fort. Down in the channel the Texas and Louisiana swung across the pass, blocking escape. The other vessels of the fleet waited in the offing

for the Clifton and her mates to reduce the fort, after which it was planned to land the forces from the transports and proceed to the Beaumont section.

“With but a few rounds of powder for his five little guns, Dowling waited the right moment and reserved his fire until the enemy, confident the fort would surrender before so great a show of superior force without a fight, stood by right under the muzzles of his guns. His first fire completely disabled the Clifton, before a shot could be fired from her guns, and as quickly as the old muzzle-loaders could be re-loaded the Sachem was given a broadside. The marksmanship was perfect, and not a load of powder was wasted. Two rounds from the fort ended the battle and the Yankee commander promptly ran up the white flag on the Clifton, the Sachem’s captain following suit a few minutes later. The guns were then turned on the Arizona, which, after a few shots had been fired, hastily lifted anchor and steamed away. She was badly damaged, and though we never learned definitely what became of her, it was believed that she sank in the gulf, for many carcasses of horses were later found along the shore below Sabine, and the Arizona carried the horses for the cavalry contingent of the Yankee forces. The enemy lost about 20 men killed, a number wounded, and about 500 men were made prisoners. Dowling’s forces escaped without a man receiving a scratch.”

The battle of Sabine Pass was the only actual fighting that took place near Beaumont during the Civil War, but the little town sent many men to the Confederate armies, and had her own company under the command of Captain George W. O'Brien. Though opposing secession, Captain O'Brien deemed it his duty when his state seceded to espouse the cause of the Confederacy, and in 1861 he became a member of Company F of the Fifth Texas Regiment. With this company he saw service in several of the battles of Tennessee and Virginia, but following an epidemic of measles which invaded the Confederate camps, he was discharged after being seriously ill with this malady, for disability and recuperation. He started on foot back to his home in Texas, but despite the hardships of such an undertaking, Captain O'Brien's health improved, and before reaching Texas he reported to one of the Confederate commanders and was then commissioned to return to Beaumont and recruit an additional company, of which he was elected and commissioned captain, and which became, first a part of Likens battalion, and afterward Spaight's Texas regiment. The company, under his brave and skillful leadership, participated in several important military events. They were first ordered to establish an earthen fort and fortifications at what is now Port Neches, with a view to controlling the Neches river against Federal gunboats, which had been dispatched to



this section for the purpose of commandeering beef cattle and supplies for the Federal army. Later on their march toward the east, he and his company took part in the battle of Fordoche, Louisiana, and a battle occurring at Mansfield, and the company was in the service of the trans-Mississippi department to the end of the war, as the war was concluded before the company was transferred east of the Mississippi.

A complete roster of Captain O'Brien's company cannot now be located. There are two men still residents of Beaumont who were members of that company, Jacob Gallier and H. W. Potter. From Mr. Gallier it is learned that Andy McFaddin, a member of Captain O'Brien's company, was killed in a Louisiana battle in a sugar field near Fordoche and that Robert Burrell, another Beaumonter, had a leg shot off and that others were killed in sharp fighting in Louisiana. It is known that Hal McClure, Lem Patillo, Harry W. Potter, Benton Spell, Timothy Rowley and others were members of this company.

The O'Brien family has a small pencilled diary which was kept by Captain O'Brien during his service in the Confederacy, but its pages are now faded and illegible.

In the O'Brien homestead on Riverside Drive there hangs upon the walls two sabers, one the com-

manding saber of Captain George W. O'Brien of the Confederacy, and the other the sword of his son, Lieutenant Chenault O'Brien of Company D, Third Texas Regiment of U. S. Volunteers of the Spanish-American war.

In September, 1897, the Beaumont Light Guards were organized, and after the declaration of war between the United States and Spain in April, 1898, the Light Guards, known as Company B, opened a recruiting station in Beaumont and began drilling prior to May 1, 1898, when the men were mustered into Federal service at Camp Mabry, Austin.

The Beaumont company was in the regiment of Colonel R. P. Smythe and in the battalion of regular army officer Major Drew, who was later killed in action in the Philippines. The company was mobilized at Austin and sent to Fort Clark on the Mexican border. Then with three other Texas companies, the Beaumonters were detached from their regiment and sent to Key West, Florida, where they were called upon to do heavy guard duty and special work in Key West. At one time orders came for the company to embark for service in Cuba, and the company was placed on board ship, but the order was countermanded. From Key West they were sent aboard the transport San Marcos to New York, thence to Montauk Point, Long Island, to a yellow fever detention camp.

From Long Island they were ordered to Fort Clark, where, after the war was over, they were mustered out. The officers and members of old Company D had the advantage of being attached to the regular army for the greater part of their service, and grew accustomed to strict regular army discipline. They endured many storms, deprivations and hardships, intermingled with pleasurable experiences which make the memory of their service a pleasant recollection.

At the time Company B was mustered into the Spanish-American war service it consisted of the following:

Officers—Captain Walter L. Smith, First Lt. Chenault O'Brien, Second Lt., Edward J. Blain, later Second Lt. Carroll Seale.

Sergeants—Warren Windham, Herbert McLeod, Fred Lamb, Robert S. Waite, Webster Blocker, George Russell, Leo Spottswood, Newt Rogers, Eldon Chester, Dan Edwards, R. J. Haywood, Tom C. King.

Corporals—J. S. Metcalf, U. S. Vincent, Antonio Frank, Robert Holton, Charles Ball, John Traylor, Marvin Scurlock, Homer Chambers, C. M. Ghent, W. C. Cobb, Ethol Shields, Perry Haytt, W. H. Gray.

Musicians—George Hyle, Charles W. McCune and Mike Welker.

Artificer—William C. Krous.

Wagoner—Frank Williams.

Privates—Mois Andrus, Howard Anthony, R. F. Ashley, D. E. Blackburn, Claud D. Blanchette, Thomas Bridgewater, Asa Bordages, J. J. Broussard, W. J. Bellows, David M. Caffall, C. L. Chessire, E. M. Chester, C. W. Coleman, Homer Chambers, Mike Crane, Will Crawford, John Cobb, Ross Drury, Jack Dies, Dan Edwards, Otto Fromme, James E. Faggard, James Goodhue, Lafayette Grant, Will H. Gray, Earl Gray, S. L. Garrett, James Grasham, Asa Hearne, Bob T. Haywood, R. L. Hand, J. W. Haynes, Charles Hazelwood, W. L. Hendrix, Perry Hyatt, Thomas Iglehart, J. D. Johnson, William L. Jennings, Tom C. King, W. J. Lamont, John R. Lane, Robert S. Leonard, Simon Light, Ed. Lockhart, Ben Matthews, J. Mouser, J. M. Maxwell, George Meyer, Ernest Maddox, H. S. McCreary, Desmond D. McKay, N. S. Murray, Sam Nathan, Jack Noguess, T. T. O'Donahoe, Carroll J. Patillo, Reese Pratt, S. Phoenix, R. E. Perry, J. D. Pressley, R. R. Patterson, R. W. Ragland, Burrell Rudd, Henry Ramsey, Carl Rhodes, Walter B. Rose, A. H. Reed, George W. Russell, E. Newt Rogers, L. D. Spottswood, John Schneider, J. M. Scott, James Simons, Patrick Stafford, Jack Schoolcraft, Marvin Scurlock, John Sinclair, W. J. Taylor, Thomas



Vaughn, Gilbert Walker, Mike Welker, Henry Weber, George B. Williams, James Williams, Joseph Wilkinson, Jack Woods, J. M. Walsh.

Many other Beaumont boys left Beaumont with the company, but some were turned down upon physical examination before the Federal officers and some were transferred to other branches of the service, among these O. J. Hille, Martin Dies and R. E. Ligon. R. E. Ligon afterward became a bugler to Theodore Roosevelt in the Rough Riders.

Two of the Spanish-American war veterans also saw service in the World War, James Goodhue and Asa Bordages.

Following the footsteps of their fathers and grandfathers the young manhood of the city quickly responded to the call and rallied to defend the flag of their country in the World War.

Thoughts of the military record lead first to those who sleep today in Flanders fields. In this list are, Sam Lewis, who fell on October 21, 1918; Private Schillie Boultinghouse, killed by a German bullet; Farrell D. Minor, Jr., one of the Rainbow division, Beaumont's young lieutenant, who also made the supreme sacrifice; Herbert Reed, wounded in action and who died on a transport en route home; James Goodhue, who was killed early in the war; Mike Horkan, who was buried at sea after succumbing to

that dread disease, influenza; Carroll Smart, only 19, hit by a machine gun bullet in the battle of the Marne, who is buried on a little knoll overlooking the river Marne, and Ernest O. Clark, killed in action.

And the wounded, the men who suffered the terrible agony of the grim hospitals, those who bore the sting of wounds and those whose bodies were maimed and who since the war have spent endless months in army hospitals, or have succumbed to the ravages of the diseases contracted during their hardships and exposures of the war—these too belong to Beaumont's roll of honor.

Beaumont had two local companies in the World War, Company M, Third Texas Infantry of the Texas National Guard, was serving on the Mexican border when war was declared. W. E. Bogan was captain. At the outbreak of the World War and on the first call for volunteers, Captain Autry M. Greer organized Company G of the Fifth Infantry, Texas National Guard. Both companies were mobilized at Camp Bowie, Fort Worth, the first part of September, 1917, and consolidated into B company, 143rd Infantry, 36th division with Captain Bogan in command. Early in July, 1918, Company B left for Europe, going via Canada and landing at Liverpool.

Captain Greer was transferred to the 142nd Infantry and promoted to major.

The story of Company B's participation in the war is one part of a glorious chapter in the complete history of the activities of the American army to be chronicled for future generations.

Shielded from the enemy by the blackness of night, the former members of the governor's guard and the Beaumont Light Guard, now united in a single company, softly treaded the road from Conde-sur-Marne to the front line at Somme-Py on the nights of October 9 and 10. Advancing as a support to the 71st Brigade of the 36th Division, the 141st and 142nd Infantry, they went into action in the front line trenches on October 11, relieving this brigade.

There in the front line trenches, with the Germans just across the river Aisne, the Beaumont men not only held their ground, but considerably strengthened their positions. They were relieved on the Champagne front by a French division on October 29, after experiencing nearly a month of constant shell and machine gun fire. Scores of the Beaumont men were wounded, while they were fighting on the Aisne and three of the boys were killed. Their comrades recovered their bodies and they were buried with military honors in the presence of their companions since early childhood.

After being relieved on the Champagne front by poilus, Company B. marched to the rear for a brief rest and to be re-equipped after nearly thirty days of roughing it in close quarters with Fritz. The signing of the armistice, effective on the notable November 11, 1918, brought a halt to activities.

Scores of other Beaumonters answered the call for selective service men in the various branches of the army. Many entered the navy and with the thousands of others in blue, helped put the fighters across and bring them back, while others entered the air service, the marines and the various departments.

No chronicle of the part Beaumont played in the world war would be complete that failed to include her share in helping build the emergency fleet which arrested universal attention at a time when events of far-reaching importance received but scant notice. This was but one phase of war activities of those who stayed at home.







PEARL AND BOWIE.

### The Newspaper Comes

**Y**EARS in the life of a newspaper are years in the life of the people it serves, for every day the newspaper goes through the experience of listening to the shouting, the weeping, the cheering, the rejoicing, the misery, and the bitterness of its world.

A vivid picture of the early days of Beaumont when the little saw-mill village was served by no other means of communication than a hand-car which brought in the mails three time a week, is told in the story of the first issues of *The Enterprise*, Beaumont's first regular newspaper, that has survived the years, which was started in 1880.

Beaumont was isolated from the outside world at that time by lack of transportation. The old bridge across the Neches was destroyed during the Civil War. No trains ran on the Texas and New Orleans railroad. There was a rusty track over which a hand-car brought in the mails from Liberty three times a week.

For general news in that day Beaumont citizens depended on the *Galveston News*, a semi-weekly edition of which came to about 15 subscribers, who would wait around Herring's store and the post-office until the hand-car arrived, usually late. Besides the *Galveston News*, there were several Hous-

ton Telegraphs, a few copies of the New York Democrat, the New Orleans Picayune, and a few religious papers.

Such was the condition when John W. Leonard, the first publisher of The Enterprise, arrived in Beaumont in 1869 from Galveston. Mr. Leonard had journeyed to Galveston from his New York home, and although a very young man, he had already traveled extensively, and had done newspaper work in Melbourne, Australia, Paris, London and New York. Naturally interested in the newspaper game, he inquired as to whether there was one to serve the community, and upon finding there was none, his ambition to start a newspaper in this town was born. But Mr. Leonard's health failed him, and he moved away from the county, going west, and not until 1879 did he return.

The first issue of The Enterprise, of which Mr. Leonard was editor, owner and publisher, was ground off on an old hand press on Sunday, November 7, 1880, a day late on account of mechanical troubles. In an apology for the delay, the editor announced that the paper "will be issued every Saturday morning in the future." This first paper was put together entirely by Mr. Leonard and one printer, and a printer's devil. Mr. Leonard wrote everything in the paper, and also set type. That first issue and succeeding issues of the little weekly were filled with



interesting news, not only of a local nature but of state and national as well. His paper ever showed a devotion to home interests and proclaimed his unyielding faith in the future of the little town.

In 1882 Mr. Leonard was again forced to leave Beaumont on account of ill-health, and when he left he gave The Enterprise to his brother-in-law, T. A. Lamb, with the understanding that he assume certain debts to a printer's concern in Houston.

Mr. Lamb conducted the weekly from 1882 to about 1895, when he sold it to a Mr. Higginbotham, who later sold it to Mort L. Bixler. About 1896 the growth of the town and the increased circulation justified the issuing of a daily, and The Enterprise became the morning daily paper.

In 1901 the "Enterprise Publishing Company" was incorporated and in 1907 "The Enterprise Company" was formed, with Messrs. W. J. Crawford, P. A. Heisig, B. Deutser, R. A. Greer, A. L. Williams, as original incorporators.

In June, 1907, Governor W. P. Hobby bought controlling interest in The Enterprise, with the original incorporators as associates.

In 1918 J. L. Mapes became associated with Governor Hobby as joint owner and publisher.

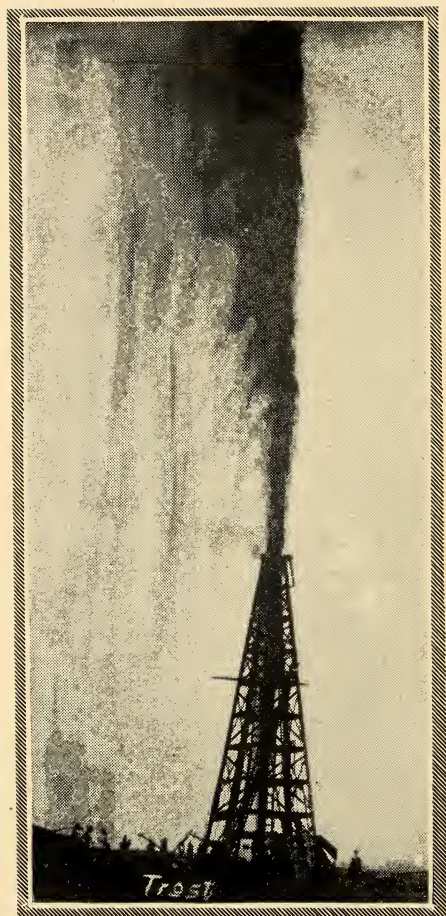
Prior to the publication of The Enterprise two papers were started, but neither survived for many

years. The Beaumont Banner, owned and edited before the war by a Mr. Vaughan, was published for one year, and The Neches Valley News was published in 1871 by W. L. Smiley, but it too was discontinued after a few years.

In 1889 the weekly Journal was started in the interest of the lumbermen of this district by R. E. Kelley, who was then secretary of the Texas-Louisiana Lumber manufacturing association.

In 1894 Mr. Kelley engaged S. H. McGary to run the weekly, which was subsequently conducted with great success. In 1898 the paper was turned into a daily afternoon paper, and was run for one year by Mr. Kelley, at the end of which time Mr. McGary purchased the paper, and it passed successively through the ownership of the McGary-Welker company, Mrs. S. H. McGary, M. E. Foster, C. L. Shless, Fentress and Marsh, and in 1920 was purchased by The Enterprise company.





LUCAS GUSHER.



### **Spindletop, the Wonder Oil Field**

**F**ROM the brain of a poor boy—a dreamer, they called him—came Spindletop, the wonder oil field of history.

Back in the sixties there were sour wells on Spindletop and the waters were said to be of great medicinal value. Several shallow wells walled with boards were sunk, practically all of them producing a different water, both in taste and mineral composition. The miniature health resort was abandoned during the war, but the story of the wells was well known.

Patillo Higgins, a poor Beaumont boy, looked beyond the shallow bottoms of the wells.

With the limited books at his command, he began the study of geology. He came to the conclusion that petroleum and gas were responsible for the water produced in the wells. The tiny bubbles coming up on the surface of the water like the patter of rain on a still pond, convinced him that there was a great gas pressure somewhere far below the surface of the earth.

Once convinced, he set about to organize a company for the purpose of testing out his theory. This was realized largely through the financial assistance of the late Captain George W. O'Brien and George

W. Carroll. The Gladys City Oil, Gas and Manufacturing company was organized in the early 90's. The company was named after Miss Gladys Bingham, now Mrs. J. Bain Price.

An attempt was made to sink a well in 1894, but the driller failed to get down. The same discouraging results were experienced in 1896 and 1898. But Mr. Higgins never faltered in his efforts, never lost faith in his judgment, and passed by the scoffing of the skeptical without comment. Without his faith and consistency, the opening up of Spindletop and other enormous petroleum deposits in Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Kansas might have been delayed many years. The discovery of Spindletop made Beaumont the best advertised town of its size in the world, and caused it to rapidly grow into a modern city. In the mining and industrial world, Patillo Higgins occupies a position along with Daniel Boone, Kit Carson, Lewis and Clark, and other great pioneers who carved paths for civilization through the trackless forests, mountains and plains of the west.

Through Spindletop Beaumont has the distinction of opening up the greatest mining era in the history of the New World. The gold discoveries of California in 1849, the later development at Cripple Creek, Colorado, and Alaska, pale into insignificance when compared to the millions that were extracted





PATILLO HIGGINS.



from the earth following the discovery of the Lucas Gusher on Spindletop in January, 1901.

Only in far-away Russia had such monster gushers been discovered before. But Russia was far removed from the great industrial centers, and the Baku fields had no marked effect upon oil as a fuel. None of the railroads in the United States had thought of oil as fuel, neither did the steamships use it. Coal was still the dominating steam producer of the civilized world.

The Spindletop discovery was cabled across the Atlantic and attracted attention of oil men and scientists in all parts of the world. Skepticism was rampant, not over the production which was estimated at 70,000 barrels a day, but the set belief that it was a freak that would soon exhaust itself—probably a crevice, and no other wells could be struck.

The Lucas gusher came in with a roar, blowing the drill pipe out of the hole, and ran wild for ten days. A great lake of oil was formed before it could be brought under control. Rocks highly impregnated with sulphur, tore the top of the derrick into shreds as if it had been between opposing armies.

Thousands of oil men gathered in Beaumont while the well was flowing, and thousands of acres were either bought or leased. Again there was a pause,

until scores of other drills, working day and night, might tell their own tale. In April of the same year the Beatty gusher was brought in, several hundred feet from the discovery well and the remainder of the story is one of hope, wealth, and despair. Men came to Beaumont penniless and went away millionaires. Others came here wealthy and left penniless. It was a game men played to their last dollar, and they hardly slept until the results were known. Hundreds of small companies were organized, and in nearly every village and hamlet in the United States owners of Beaumont oil stock could be found.

Oil lands rapidly grew in value, but an effort was made to make room for all of them on Spindletop. Many acres were divided up into 1-64ths, which gave room enough to drill a gusher. One concern made it a business to contract with a newly-organized company to bring in a six-inch gusher for the nominal sum of \$25,000. Anywhere the drill went down on Spindletop proper a gusher was the result. One woman who collected garbage in Beaumont daily sold her pig pasture for \$35,000.

The failure of so many companies was due entirely to the lack of a market. Thousands of barrels of oil were contracted for and delivered at 3 cents a barrel, and in some instances for 2 cents a barrel. There were no pipe lines, and only a limited number of tank ships and tank cars. Railroads had not





**MRS. J. BAIN PRICE (GLADYS BINGHAM)  
FOR WHOM GLADYS CITY WAS NAMED.**



yet started using oil for fuel, and it was unknown in the ships on the high seas.

It was then argued that the oil was too heavy for refining purposes, but this theory was soon exploded. Within a short time tankers began to carry it out to refineries along the North Atlantic and in Europe. More pipe lines were conducted, and the work of building refineries in Jefferson county began. Today Jefferson county is the largest oil-refining district in the world, turning out more wealth annually than the miners of California ever dreamed of.

Railroads and industries began to use crude oil for fuel, and then it was tried out in ships. Today most of the navies of the civilized world use oil for fuel, and it is burned under the boilers in thousands of commercial ships and most of the locomotives. Refineries in and around Beaumont forwarded most of the lubricants and fuel used by the allied navies during the World War and the gasoline that drove the trucks on the battlefields of France and Belgium.

Spindletop furnished an incentive for the prospectors to search for other fields. These wildcatters, as they are known in oil circles, spread out in fan-like shape, opening up Sour Lake, Saratoga, Humble, Batson and Jennings. On they swept to North Louisiana, Oklahoma, and then Kansas, and finally north Texas and Arkansas. The wave of liquid gold swept hundred of miles north, east and west, with

Beaumont remaining the basis of the industry. Pipe lines followed the wildcatters as the reported success, and the lines that first reached from Beaumont to deep water turned northward and crept through forests, over hills and across the prairies of Oklahoma and Kansas to bring the fluid to the discovery point.

Today these pipe lines converging in Beaumont and spreading out like monster talons from north Texas on the west to Arkansas on the east and north to Kansas, represent investments of hundreds of millions of dollars, while the value of oil properties represented in producing wells, refineries, pipe lines, pumping stations, storage tanks, and other equipment following the discovery of oil at Beaumont, pass far beyond the billion-dollar mark.

The mother of the great oil development area is still producing oil, although it has settled down to something around one thousand barrels a day. Although the enormous gas pressure formerly rushed it out through six-inch casing up to 212 feet in the air, this being recorded in Heywood No. 4, no power could rob the rich deposits so quickly and it still trickles through the sand and honeycombed rocks that formerly produced the gushers. Walking beams still are nodding away like some sleepy giant, and bringing to the earth the greatest known agency in modern civilization—oil.

This chapter was written from first-hand information by Robert S. Waite, a resident of Beaumont at the time oil was discovered. Acknowledgment is due Mr. Waite also for other aid in the preparation of this volume and for the use of his files containing information about Beaumont.

### Boom Days

**I**N the twinkling of an eye, Beaumont, the slow-moving, quiet little sawmill town of 9000 people was converted into a seething, fighting, shouting mob of 15,000 money-mad adventurers, each striving for a share in the hitherto undreamed-of wealth that lay beneath the uninviting, barren surface of Spindletop. The bringing in of the Lucas gusher on January 10, 1901, was responsible, raising the curtain upon one of the greatest commercial and speculative dramas in the history of the development of the country.

On the morning of January 11, the metropolitan papers of the nation carried the news of the gusher that flowed 75,000 barrels of oil a day. It was as if some tremendous, unseen force, moving irresistably and with a speed immeasurable, drew every thought and resource of the nation toward the vortex that was Spindletop. All the commonplace sources of mere livelihood and legitimate profit were forgotten, while every mind centered its thoughts by day and dreams by night upon the dark column spouting through the derrick and roaring its message of treasures ready to flow into the hands of men.

The merchant left his desk, the clerk his counter, the lawyer his books, and the laborer laid down his tools. Every man saw the opportunity of making







THE OIL BOOM.



a million without the slow, tedious efforts of ordinary calling. Every acre became a potential oil field, every town lot a site for a derrick. The toil-bent farmer who owned a few acres of truck land anywhere near the discovery well became over-night an opulent owner of "oil land" and the center of interest of a raving throng of promoters, investors and speculators, under whose competition his little farm took on a new coating of gold almost with every passing minute. Day by day the streets became more crowded with strangers, and day by day the fever grew, until the little city roared like a hive, and train came in crowded with impatient men, who leaped off before the station was reached. The oil boom was on.

Fortunes were made and lost in such ever-increasing rapidity that it bewildered one. Trades were made on the streets, in hotel lobbies, brokers stood on corners crying out their trades, and land swapped hands with only a pencil-written memoranda. On such slender evidence of ownership even the title of oil-producing wells, it is said, often depended.

One instance is told of a broker standing on a soap box calling out: "I have an acre of ground in the Bullock survey for \$1000." "It's a trade", answered a man from the crowd, and later that same land sold for \$20,000, and oil has yet to be

struck on it. All the madness, the nerve-racking, brain-reeling frenzy of all the stock exchanges of the nation loosed upon the community could not have approximated the bedlam that roared about the little town during those first days of the oil boom, and, leaving no vestige of the old order, transformed the little town overnight into a young metropolis, with the ways and manners and wealth of a great city.

There was no possible way of taking care of the enormous crowds that poured into the little city, and speculators and schemers who could not find a place to sleep, opened offices on street corners or on the hotel verandas. Every cot and bed in Beaumont was put to use, and many of them did day service for the fellow who had to spend the night on the streets.

At restaurants men stood in line and waited their turn at the tables, and on many a vacant lot enterprising caterers who could not get a location placed long tables and with small cooking stoves served thousands of hungry men every day and night.

Property-holders reaped a golden harvest, every available space was rented to as many tenants as could be crowded into it, and still hundreds of oil company brokers and real estate men were without a domicile.



The easiest thing to put one's hand on in Beaumont was money. Land would bring money, but money would not bring land always. The demand for clerks, bookkeepers, and stenographers was far beyond the supply. A typewriter rented for fabulous prices, and most of the time could not be had for twice its value. A common laborer earned enough in two days to provide for his family for a week. Thus demand was out of all proportion to supply, and money was obtainable almost for the asking. Because of the heavy purchase of oil stocks and the sending of many hundreds of thousands of dollars to Beaumont, the two local banks were taking in so much money each and every day that they were experiencing the greatest difficulty in keeping things straight.

They had neatly printed signs posted on the doors reading: "Please do not try to get into the bank before nor after banking hours. We have more work than we can do before twelve o'clock each night." The cashier of one of the banks in those days tells of going to work before 6 o'clock in the morning and working until midnight. Food was sent to him there, but sometimes he was too busy to eat it. He was one of the men who were sick of the oil boom.

During these first days of the momentous period the little community underwent many hardships

and faced tremendous problems. The makeshifts necessary on account of the sudden increase in population brought about unhealthful sanitary conditions. The enormous increase in traffic over its streets destroyed them, and within a year its schools were overcrowded with children of the newcomers. Homes for the increased population had to be provided, and the supply of common and mechanical labor was insufficient, and for several years living conditions in the town were deplorable.

But gradually, the community for months in a nebulous state, without form and void, began to take shape. The leaven of good morals and sober sense brought order out of chaos, and the town began the healthy growth that has brought it to its present stable prosperity and unexcelled cultural attainments, and while now the oil industry may be said to be but one of the many sources of Beaumont's income and growing wealth, the city owes its first long stride toward its present metropolitan proportions to the frenzied days of the oil boom.

### Industries That Built the City

**T**HE first industrial effort in Beaumont was the killing of cattle for hides and tallow. The carcasses, which are worth so much today, were thrown into the Neches river to be swept on out into the gulf and become food for fish and carrion fowl. Today such a waste would be considered criminal, but was it then?

Cattle multiplied in the forests and on the coastal plains in great numbers, practically without care or shelter, and only with what feed nature afforded. The market for beef cattle was limited, and the only way to reach one was to drive them overland to New Orleans. There were no great packing houses to absorb the surplus, or cold storage plants, no refrigerator cars, no refrigerator ships to reach distant markets. The cattleman was much in the same position as Daniel Defoe placed Robinson Crusoe when he landed on a lonely island. Crusoe needed plank with which to build a house, but having nothing at hand but an adz, was forced to hew away all the log but the one plank in the center. It was an enormous waste of timber, but the plank was worth more to him than the tree.

It was the same way with the cattleman. The meat was valuable if there was anyone to consume it. But there was always a market for the hides and

tallow, and they could be shipped to any part of the world. He took what he could use and threw the other away, as Robinson Crusoe did the greater part of the tree. Any other course would have allowed the cattle to die of old age.

The Neches river made an admirable open sewer, for there were practically no inhabitants along its banks be offended at the floating carcasses. Little did the primitive butcher who was rendering up tallow to grease bearings in machinery and provide candles to light the humble cabins, dream that within less than a century there would be extracted from the ground within three miles of where he had the cattle corralled more lubricating oil and kerosene for lighting than the entire world was producing in tallow. Such dreams were left for future generations.

So far as is known, the next attempt at an industry in Beaumont was the purchase by a man named Ogden of 50 acres with the view of manufacturing brick. Just what became of his efforts is not known, but the Beaumont Brick company, with its plant on the east side of the Neches river, is one of the biggest brick manufacturing concerns in the state.

The next step was the manufacture of shingles, which was a very slow process in those days. Logs were sawn by hand into the proper lengths and



after being split with froes were then dressed down with hand drawing-knives.

This industry gradually drifted into sawmills, and they furnished the first foundation for a real industrial center, although hardly sufficient to make a great city. But there were fortunes made out of the lumber industry, and many of these captains of industry invested freely in the upbuilding of other institutions.

Outside the lumber industry there were no great strides made in an industrial way for some years. Brick yards northwest of the city furnished employment for a number of men, the building of railroads with accompanying shops, created quite an industry within themselves, while the demand from the sawmills brought about the building of iron foundries and machine shops.

It was not until January 10, 1901, that the great industrial era opened up that was to build a city in a score of years. On that date the Lucas gusher came in with a roar at Spindletop, and the future of the sawmill city was made secure. Oil brought to Beaumont many of the allied industries which manufactured machinery, tanks, tank cars, and other equipment. The manufacture of oil well machinery and supplies is one of the big industries in Beaumont today. The iron and brass manufacturing business is now represented by nine industries, exclusive of machine and repair shops.

These institutions have a combined capital of \$1,215,000, and annual sales are near \$4,000,000. Approximately 600 men are employed, who receive \$900,000 annually.

But back of the oil industry came rice, which resulted in the construction of four of the largest mills in the United States. The planting of rice began in the 90's and has grown into an important industry. Feed manufacturing mills followed closely behind.

Realizing from oil other than the benefits accruing from pumping it from the earth was slow. Northern refineries had been accustomed to a much lighter grade, and condemned the heavy coastal crudes as being unfit for refining purposes. This theory was soon exploded, and an experimental still was erected. This was followed by others, and from them grew the great plants of the Magnolia Petroleum company in Beaumont, the Gulf Refining company, the Texas company (two plants) and the Pure Oil Refinery in other parts of the county. One of the Texas company plants became the largest roofing manufacturing plant in the world, asphaltum, which formed the basis of Spindletop oil, being used in its manufacture.

Oil products in the way of kerosene, gasoline, lubricating oil, greases, paraffine and laxatives, are shipped to every country in the civilized world. A great deal of it is carried out in enormous tank

ships, while some is canned to be transported across rivers and over mountains in China, Africa, Persia, India, South American and many other countries where railroads and waterways do not reach the interior. Asphaltum is manufactured in large quantities to be used in building streets and roads.

During the World War wooden shipbuilding was developed, and hundreds of men were employed in those plants when the German submarines menaced shipping on the seven seas. Beaumont retained one large shipbuilding plant from this effort, which is equipped with a marine railway and facilities for building both wooden and steel vessels. It also secured at the same time a tank car and structural steel plant and a plant manufacturing steel drums for oil containers.

In Beaumont there are approximately 135 manufacturing plants turning out a great variety of products, among which are: Oils, furs, candy, sheet metal products, ships, tank cars, tanks, oil drums, rice, feed, bakery products, bottled goods, bags, boxes, crates, brick, boilers, floor sweeping compounds, jewelry, cigars, oil well rigs and supplies, refinery supplies and equipment, mattresses, brooms, awnings, ice, lumber, shingles, printing, auto trailers, medicine, mill work, creosoting products, marble and granite materials, milk products, barrels, optical goods, cabinet work, macaroni, packing house supplies, and others.

### **Lumber, The City's First Stepping Stone**

**T**HE lumber industry of Beaumont might be said to have begun with the first tree felled by Noah Tevis when he settled on the banks of the Neches to carve out his own fortune and blaze the way for civilization. When the ax fell on the first tree to build the first log cabin, there resounded through the still forests a noise that was to echo back a half century later by the hum of hundreds of saw-mills, the whis of as many planers and the puffing of locomotives as they drew the manufactured products to many parts of the United States or to the wharves to be exported to the four corners of the globe.

The early settler had to have wood and water-and it was here in abundance, the forests offering pine, cypress and more than fifty varieties of hard, wood. There had to be something near at hand out of which a place of habitation could be built, for there were no lumber yards upon which to draw for supplies.

When the walls of the first cabin were finished, the fro was brought into play to split boards used as a substitute for shingles, doors and window shutters. This was the first real manufactured product turned out of the forests in the Beaumont district.

Notwithstanding the large amount of virgin pine timber in this section, shingle-making received first



attention, and was a growing industry. Shingles were made by hand, the operation consisting of splitting the blocks sawn to the proper length with a froe and then dressing them down with a drawing-knife. They were shipped mainly by schooner to Galveston and Sabine Pass, the latter being an important port at the time.

The real manufacture of lumber began in the crudest way. A pit was dug deep enough to accommodate a man underneath the log and another on top. A crosscut saw was pulled through the log lengthwise, turning out boards in that manner. This "plant" was located on the Neches river in the vicinity of where the O'Brien home now stands. Authentic dates and names of the men engaged in the task are lacking.

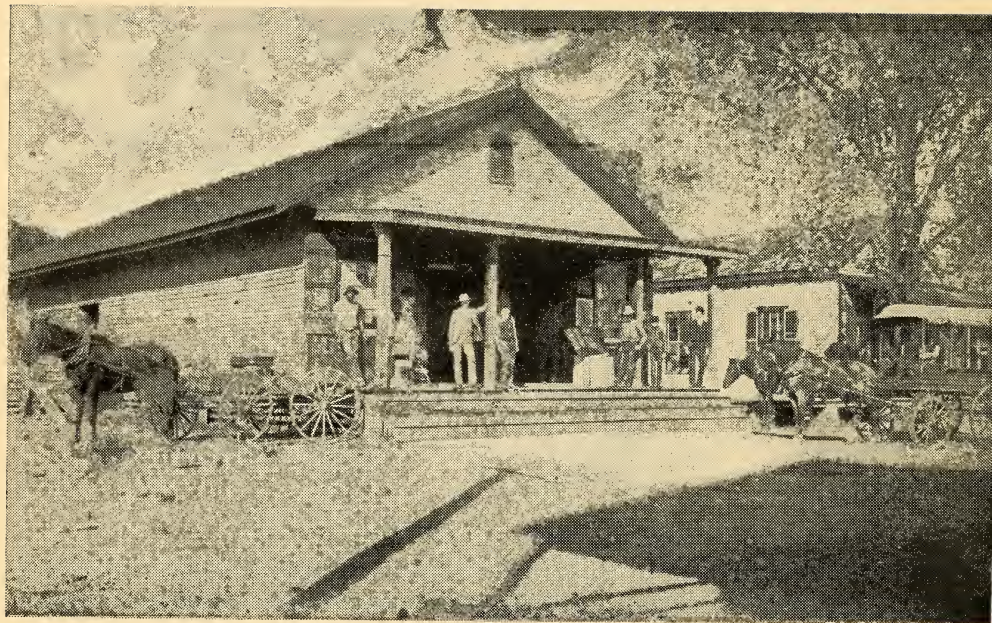
Shingle-making, however, was flourishing by this time and almost every man who had money enough to rig up a windlass to draw logs out of the river went into the business. Boys made their money in those days by bunching shingles instead of selling newspapers as they do today. Logs were secured by dragging them to the Neches river with oxen and floating them down to the plant. The early ox cart was a two-wheel affair with a windlass for clearing one end of the log in order that it might be dragged. Oxen were used exclusively in the woods until 1885.

The next step was the "muly" mill, which consisted of a power arrangement to pull a saw similar to the crosscut of today. Then came the sash-saw, which was rigged up from either end, cutting lumber much in the fashion as is done at the present time, although it operated up and down instead of being a continuous motion, as is the case with the modern band mill. When the first whipsaw mill built in Beaumont reached a capacity of 1000 feet a day it was classed as the greatest mill in the state. This is quite a contrast to some of the present-day mills, which cut up to a quarter million feet a day.

In 1859 Ross and Alexander put up the first circular mill, here, with a capacity of 2000 feet a day. This plant was afterwards sold to Long and Son. Otto Rull built a mill, but soon afterwards died with yellow fever, and the plant was purchased by A. J. Ward, father of John Ward, who afterwards was a large manufacturer of lumber. After the war it was purchased by Pipkin and Haltom, John C. Ward later buying the Haltom interest.

The war came on at this time and practically put a stop to the infant industry, there being no market for lumber in the south except that used by the Confederate government. It was in this mill that some of the 42nd Massachusetts regiment captured by the Confederates when the Federals attempted to take Galveston in 1863 were camped.





LONG AND COMPANY STORE.



In 1870 the Long sawmill was changed to a shingle mill and, with what was considered wonderful machinery in those days, turned out 40 shingles a day. After the death of Mr. Long the plant was operated by Mrs. J. M. Long, F. L. Carroll, W. A. Fletcher and John W. Keith. It passed out of existence in 1896.

In 1869 the Bremer mill was built, with a capacity of 1500 feet a day. It was not until the 70's that the industry really began to expand and make Beaumont the greatest lumber market in Texas.

In 1876 the Reliance Lumber company was organized, William, Mark and V. Wiess and Harry Potter being the principal owners. They erected a modern mill in Brake's bayou, and it continued in operation under the same management until 1902, when the Kirby Lumber company was formed, that organization purchasing the three big mills in Beaumont. It continued operation until 1920.

The Beaumont Lumber company was organized in 1876. It was situated on the site now occupied by the city wharves. The organizers purchased a plant formerly in operation on Adams bayou. The principal stockholders of this company were W. A. Fletcher, F. L. Carroll, John W. Keith, Mrs. J. M. Long, John M. Gilbert and Olive and Sternenberg.

In 1877 Smith and Brothers built a mill where the waterworks now stand. It was later purchased by Olive and Sternenberg and operated as a shingle mill until it became known as the Eagle Mill.

In the meantime Reagan and Goldsmith had built a mill near where the ice plant now stands. This property finally fell into the hands of Smith and Seale and later became the Texas Tram and Lumber company, with W. A. Fletcher and John W. Keith becoming the principal owners.

When the Texas Tram and Lumber company, the Beaumont Lumber company and the Reliance Lumber company mills were in operation, upon them rested the prosperity of the city. This was before the discovery of oil at Spindletop, and everybody worked at the mill. A day then was from daylight until dark, and the present day of eight or ten hours was unheard of. The saws started with the dawn and were not stilled until darkness came on.

The three mills operated large commissaries, and they were much larger stores than could be found in the Beaumont of that day. Mill checks were in common use, and labor was invariably paid off with them. They were good for face value at the stores, usually suffered a discount when converted into cash. For that matter stores uptown accepted checks, holding them until redeemed by the lumber company.

At that the lumber industry was of such great importance that it had built a city of 10,000 inhabitants before the appearance of oil.

With the exception of a few cattlemen, practically all of the old families who became wealthy could trace their fortunes to the lumber industry. Most of them had started as laborers, not a few in the woods getting out logs. The late Captain George W. O'Brien made shingles following the close of the Civil War, in which he participated. The late W. A. Fletcher spent many days floating logs down the river at \$1 per day and considered it good wages. The late John C. Ward began as a shipping clerk in 1868 at the age of 16. John N. Gilbert first went to work in a commissary at very small wages. The first job secured by B. R. Norvell, president of the American National bank, was deliveryman for the Beaumont Lumber company's commissary. Steve W. and Beauregard Pipkin began their business career bundling shingles while boys.

The passing of the big mills has diminished but slightly Beaumont's importance as a lumber center. It is now the largest exporter of yellow pine timbers in the United States, and is rapidly becoming one of the greatest hardwood centers. The Kirby Lumber company has erected two large hardwood plants at Voth, nine miles north of the city, while smaller mills are scattered throughout the woods. The

Neches Lumber company, the Miller-Vidor Lumber company and the Southern Land and Lumber company still have plants in the city, while Beaumont capitalists are interested in many mills throughout the lumber belt and are heavy holders of timber lands.



### Providence Rice

THE present generation looks upon the rice industry as something entirely new in Jefferson county, and that until a comparatively recent date no one had ever conceived the idea of raising the pearly cereal on the coastal plains of Texas. As a matter of fact, the culture of rice in a limited as well as primitive way began not so many years after the early settlers began raising the three staple crops—corn, cotton and pumpkins.

The first rice grown in Jefferson county was planted by David French, on the old French homestead, three and one-half miles north of the city of Beaumont, soon after the close of the Civil War. At that time irrigation systems were unknown in this section, and the grower trusted in providence for sufficient rainfall to mature the crop. In fact such crops were designated as "providence rice".

It was planted in rows and cultivated in the same manner as other crops. Mrs. Thomas Langham, daughter of Mr. French, was a very small girl at that time, and was given the task of keeping the birds away from the rice while maturing. Only enough to supply home needs, with some to spare for chicken feed was planted. It was milled by hollowing out the end of a log about three feet in length, making a mortar, after the fashion found in labor-

atories in the present day. A piece of wood about three feet long and three inches in diameter was rounded at the end and used as a pestle to grind the rice until the husks were removed. The glistening white polished rice of today was unknown to the early settlers.

J. B. Langham also raised rice about the same time and made quite a success of it. In 1868 Mr. French brought some old machinery from Louisiana and put up a small rice mill near the French homestead. Not being a mechanic himself, the mill was a failure.

Little more was heard from rice growing until 1886, when Louis Bordages and Edgar Carruthers planted about 200 acres near Fannett. This was also "providence" rice, but they raised a good crop, and from this is dated the rice industry of Jefferson county on a commercial basis. Valentine and Live Hargroves raised rice near Big Hill in the late 80's.

Irrigation was begun in 1891 when W. G. Lovell, B. C. Hebert, and Joe Broussard built small pumping plants on Taylor's bayou. These plants demonstrated the value of Jefferson county soil for rice culture when scientifically grown, and brought about the formation of the first irrigation company. The Beaumont Irrigation company was incorporated in 1898 by local capital, and built a pumping plant on Pine Island bayou, with canals extending south-

ward. Approximately 3000 acres were watered from this canal the first year, and gradually increased until it was watering 25,000 acres.

The McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle canal with a capacity sufficient to water 10,000 acres, was constructed in 1900. The pumping plant is located on the Neches river south of the Magnolia Petroleum company's plant.

Previous to this, in 1899, the Port Arthur rice canal was constructed, with a pumping plant on the Neches river near where the Pure Oil Refinery now stands. It was too near the gulf, and went out of business when incoming salt water made it unfit for irrigation purposes. It was capable of watering 10,000 acres.

In 1903 the Treadway canal was constructed, and one of the largest pumping plants in the United States built on Pine Island bayou. It has a capacity sufficient to water 35,000 acres. In the meantime many more private pumping plants were built along Taylor and Hillebrandt bayous, the largest of this class taking water from Lovell's lake.

With the cultivation of rice becoming a permanent industry in Jefferson county, Joe Broussard added rice milling machinery to his grist mill in 1892, and it became known as the Beaumont Rice and Grist mills. This plant was located near where the Southern Pacific passenger station now stands.

In 1900 the Hinz Rice Milling company of California erected a modern plant on the block just south of the court house, the former homestead of George W. Carroll. After operating for two seasons this plant burned down and was never rebuilt.

In the same year Gustave A. Jahn of New York built a modern brick mill on Main street, which was later purchased by William Carroll and associates, and became the Atlantic Rice mills.

In 1901 Joe E. Broussard, founder of the first rice mill in Texas, built a large plant in the western end of the city, known as the Beaumont Rice mills. It burned down and was rebuilt in 1902. It is one of the most modern plants in the rice belt, and is equipped with an elevator for handling grain.

In 1902 the McFaddin-Wiess-Kyle mill was built, a modern fireproof structure with elevator equipment. It has not been operated since 1921. The Tyrrell Rice Milling company was organized by B. A. Steinhagen in 1915, and this concern erected a modern mill.

There are approximately 200,000 acres in Jefferson county subject to rice culture with irrigation facilities. While the coming of industries, general farming, tank farms, and the constant expansion of towns and cities have occupied thousand of acres formerly classed, if not actually used as rice land, the



installation of drainage is making more land subject to cultivation, and there is little likelihood of the potential acreage suitable for rice culture being reduced for some years to come.

Rice is by far the largest agricultural crop in Jefferson county and comes third in exports out of Beaumont, oil and lumber leading. Rice from Beaumont mills is shipped to all sections of the United States, Mexico, Canada, West Indies, South America and Europe.

### **“Thirty Feet to the Gulf”**

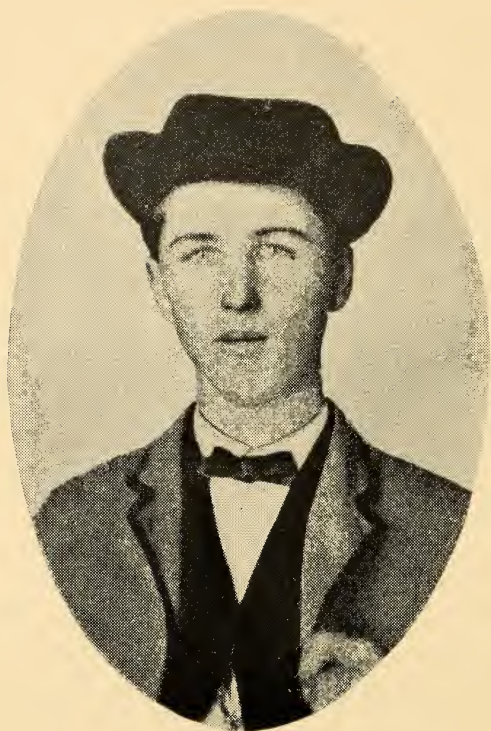
**F**ROM its beginnings Beaumont has been a port. Schooners laden with lumber, shingles, cotton and other farm products skimmed over the river to coastwise ports, the West Indies, Mexico and South America. These white-winged carriers of the sea performed the same service as the white-covered wagons did in interior trade.

Next came the small steamer, with its stern wheels, which paddled up the river as far as Nacogdoches county, plied other rivers along the coast, and made nearby coastal ports, although their radius did not equal the schooners which were not averse to entering any sea.

But the misfortune of having the Neches river empty into Sabine lake gave only three feet of water. It was in the 90's that the citizens of Beaumont began an agitation for a deeper waterway with the government help. All efforts other than that put forward by the representative in congress from this district had to be paid for by private subscription. But the fight was carried on until a start was made by the government, and the citizens contributed through taxation to induce the government to complete the work.

Dredging was done at the mouth of the Neches river in 1880 and 1895 to secure a channel 50 feet





S. B. COOPER WHEN 19.



wide and five feet deep, but funds were exhausted before deep water in Sabine Lake was reached. As late as 1897 there was only four feet of water connecting Beaumont with the Gulf of Mexico.

In 1899 a project was approved for dredging to a depth of eight feet from the mouth of the Neches river to deep water in Sabine Lake. But it was not until March 3, 1905, that the people of Beaumont began to see a realization of their dreams, a beginning they believed would ultimately result in bringing ocean-going steamers to the city wharves. At this time a project was approved and amended in 1907, providing for a channel 100 feet wide and nine feet deep. This work was completed in 1908, and became serviceable in ordinary high tide to vessels drawing 11 feet of water. It was due to the valiant and untiring efforts of Congressman S. B. Cooper that this depth was secured, his activity being justified by the fact that business developed to approximately a quarter of a million tons annually. Even then the government was not convinced that the possible development of commerce would justify the expense of deepening the channel.

But in 1909 the people of Beaumont got authority by act of the Texas legislature to organize a navigation district, thus initiating the plan of localities sharing in the cost of deep-water development. This proposal for the people to match the government dollar for dollar in bearing the expense, after over-

coming great opposition under leadership of Senator Joseph W. Bailey, backed by a strong committee of citizens sent to Washington from Beaumont, was adopted by congress in 1911, providing for a channel 25 feet deep and 90 feet wide. Under its provisions the Jefferson County Navigation District was required to put up \$428,000 and agree to maintain the channel for three years. The total cost of improvements, including the Sabine river, was \$1,143,000.

The port was opened in 1916. The first ocean-going steamship to reach the city was the Nicauraga, and from this beginning the use of the ship channel jumped from less than a quarter million tons with nine feet of water, to more than a million tons in 1918, and near three million tons eight years after the port was opened.

This surprising use of the waterway demanded full recognition at the hands of congress, and Beaumont, as well as the Sabine district, received a classification along with the older ports of the nation, a classification which justified the government in defraying all the expenses of future improvements with the exception of certain river work.

Still pleading, still pounding away and with increasing tonnage passing through the port, the dreams of the early advocates were surpassed when congress appropriated on March 1, 1922, \$2,191,111 to provide a channel 30 feet deep and 125 feet wide.

This, in effect, will give the port 31 feet of water, which is sufficient to accommodate the largest vessel afloat, with the exception of a few transatlantic liners and battleships of the dreadnaught type. It places Beaumont on an equal footing with the greatest inland waterways in the world.

The greatest advantage of the port of Beaumont is safety of vessels during storms, and fresh water, which has the effect of freeing ships of barnacles. Shipping in the Beaumont harbor has never been damaged by high winds, as is so often the case with ports near the open sea.

In the deepening and widening of the river, the work of straightening out the stream so far as navigation is concerned, has been going steadily on. In the first major project, the elimination of bends shortened the distance approximately one and one-half miles. It also had the effect of making navigation easier.

The thirty-foot project will carry some like improvement, shortening the distance approximately another one and one-half miles. In fact the port of Beaumont is in very much the same position as Cairo, Illinois, when Mark Twain commented upon the work that had been done in straightening out the Mississippi river.

Mark Twain was brought up on a steamboat, and years after leaving the steamboat service he again

made the trip from Cairo, Illinois, to New Orleans. He remarked that at the rate the distance between Cairo and New Orleans was being shortened up, in the space of 2000 years Cairo would be 168 miles below New Orleans. At the rate the distance between Beaumont and the mouth of the Neches is being shortened, within 100 years Beaumont will be 275 miles below Sabine Pass.

The city of Beaumont has shown a wonderful amount of progress in providing facilities with which to make the port usable. The waterway was practically valueless until provision had been made to handle the inbound and outbound cargoes.

Rather than risk the danger of private monopoly at the water front, the city purchased land from time to time, until it now owns the water front from Sabine Pass avenue to the Kansas City Southern bridge. It has been liberal in its expenditure of money to construct facilities in the way of wharves. Altogether \$1,400,000 has been spent from bond issues for this purpose.

Beaumont as a deep sea port is probably the first port in the world to obtain that distinction through the faith of its own citizens, a faith that compelled recognition from the United States government. In this it set an example that gave cities like Orange and Houston connections with the open sea for large vessels.



### Its Government

**B**EAUMONT is governed under the council-commission-manager form, which is considered the most advanced form of municipal government that has been devised. This form of government was adopted in 1920, along with the present charter, and after a sharply drawn campaign.

Elective municipal government in the United States is but little better than a century old, and the beginning was not altogether elective. In 1822 the state of New York adopted a constitution which provided that the elective legislature of the city of New York, instead of the governor of the state, should have the appointment of the mayor. This was the first effective step toward home rule.

It remained for the west to take a bold step in putting municipal affairs wholly within the hands of the electorate. In the same year Detroit and St. Louis reached something akin to the aldermanic form of government by providing that the mayor should be elected by the people. This was regarded as revolutionary, but finally spread over the entire United States.

The next important step in municipal government was born in the southwest, out of necessity. In 1900 the city of Galveston was all but destroyed

by a tropical storm accompanied by a tidal wave. When the people viewed the ruins and the gulf that might again spread devastation, they realized that an immense amount of money must be raised or abandon the beautiful island city. There was no hope of creating sufficient confidence under the old aldermanic political form of government to induce capitalists to advance such a huge amount of money or induce the state to come to the rescue.

In this crisis the business men got together and devised a commission form of government, a non-partisan affair, which would have a well-known and successful business man at the head of each department. Galveston arose from the ruins greater than ever before, and at great expense erected a seawall which has proven to be a barrier against tidal waves.

This advanced step in handling municipal affairs attracted the attention of the entire nation, with the result that other cities began to adopt the commission form of government.

This step in municipal government was left undisturbed until 1908, when the comparatively small city of Staunton, Virginia, advertised for a competent person to manage its city affairs. Fortunately for the movement, a very capable man was secured, and within a few years the commission-manager form of government overshadowed the straight commission form.

The next move in that direction was made by the city of Sherman, Texas, which adopted a council-commission-manager form of government in 1915. The city of Beaumont went still farther by adopting a like form of government, when it gave into the city council the veto power, the council having the same power in that respect as a mayor under the old aldermanic form of government.

Under the charter adopted in 1919, and becoming effective in April, 1920, the people elect a mayor and fifteen aldermen, three from each ward. From these are selected two commissioners, representing two wards, while the mayor represents the third.

The commission possesses the legislative power and is charged with passing all ordinances, but these are subject to the approval or disapproval of the city council. The council has general supervisory powers over all acts of the commission.

The commission employs a city manager who assumes control of city affairs in much the same manner as a manager of a private industry. With the exception of the city clerk and city attorney, he appoints the heads of all departments, and may remove them at will. In order to remove the manager as far as possible from politics, the charter provides that the commission or council may remove him at any time, or after the expiration of six months after he assumed office, he may be recalled by a vote of the people.

The administration of city affairs is divided up into five departments, law, public service, public welfare, public safety and finance.

The department of law looks after all legal matters pertaining to the city, the preparation of ordinances, appearing in behalf of the city in the courts and as prosecutor in corporation court.

The department of public service has charge of all matters pertaining to sidewalks, streets, bridges, sewers, public buildings, and grounds belonging to the city, except parks and playgrounds.

The department of public welfare manages all charitable, correctional, reformatory institutions and agencies belonging to the city; manages all parks, playgrounds and all other facilities provided for recreation, amusement and instructions.

The department of public safety has charge of the police and fire departments.

The department of finance has supervision of all accounts and the custody of all public moneys of the city; the purchase and disposition of all supplies, issuance of licenses, collection of taxes, etc.

The city commission also has the power to appoint a city board, a public health board, a public charity board and other advisory boards as it may deem necessary to the public interest.



With the exception of the city attorney, the heads of these departments are appointed by the city manager. As a matter of economy at the present time, the city manager is acting director of the department of public welfare, public service and public safety. Heads of these departments were provided for in the charter in order that they might be filled at such time as the city becomes so large that it would be impracticable for the city manager to direct the various departments in addition to his regular duties.

The city charter also provides for the initiative, referendum and recall. Under this provision the citizens may require the commission to consider a proposed ordinance upon the petition of 10 per cent of the qualified voters at the preceding general city election. If the commission rejects or changes the proposed ordinance, the petitioners may require its submission to the council. Should the council reject or change the ordinance presented, a petition of 15 per cent of the qualified voters may require it to be submitted to a vote of the people. A petition signed by 25 per cent of the qualified voters may require an ordinance passed by the commission and approved by the council or the council should fail to take action, to be submitted to a vote of the electors for their approval or rejection. Ordinances passed as emergency measures are subject to the same provisions. No ordinance enacted

or repealed under the initiative and referendum may be amended or repealed within six months.

Upon the filing of the proper petition the electorate may recall any and all elective officers and may recall the city manager after the expiration of six months after he has assumed office.

Records show that the first election to decide whether Beaumont should become an incorporated town was held in September, 1860. There were three hundred white inhabitants in this city then, and the incorporation election passed. The corporation lapsed between 1860 and 1881, however, so in the early fall of 1881 corporation of the city was voted again. The election resulted in 115 votes being cast for incorporation and 107 against.

On August 15, 1881, John C. Craig, a merchant whose place of business was at the corner of Pine and Tevis streets, was elected mayor. The taxable value of all property in Beaumont at that time was \$491,010, or less than one-hundreth of what the value was in 1924.

On April 4, 1882, G. C. Caswell defeated Mayor Craig and served until his death, which occurred on August 6, 1883.

John W. Keith, who was a member of the first board of aldermen, received all of the 37 votes cast and served out the balance of Mr. Caswell's term.

On April 6, 1884, N. W. Smith was elected mayor.

In April, 1886, Dr. B. F. Calhoun, one of the pioneer physicians of Beaumont, was elected mayor. He resigned June 8, 1887. John B. Goodhue was named mayor pro tem and served until June 27, 1887, when J. F. Lanier, attorney, was elected mayor. After serving four months he resigned, taking effect on October 4, 1887.

A special election to fill the vacancy was then held, and resulted in the election of A. S. John. Mr. John was re-elected in April, 1888, and served until his death, which occurred on February 26, 1889. Alexander Wynn, at that time one of the owners of the Beaumont Enterprise, was elected to fill out the unexpired term. He was re-elected in 1890.

In 1892 W. A. Ives, who later served the city for several years as clerk, was elected mayor.

Mayor Ives served two terms, and was succeeded by John E. Eastham.

In 1898 D. P. Wheat, who later served as county judge and judge of Jefferson county court of law, was elected mayor. He defeated W. R. Caswell by the narrow margin of three votes.

Judge Wheat resigned in 1901 to become county judge and was succeeded by Thomas H. Langham, who had served the county for many years as sheriff and tax collector. Mr. Langham served until 1906,

when he was succeeded by E. A. Fletcher, who held the office until 1918, declining to offer for re-election.

Dr. E. J. Diffenbacher was elected mayor in 1918, and the end of his term saw the passing of the old aldermanic form of government, which consisted of a mayor and six aldermen.

With the adoption of the new charter, B. A. Steinhagen was elected mayor and served two terms. George J. Roark became the first city manager and served throughout the Steinhagen administration. Dr. J. B. Swonger and T.A. Lamb were the first city commissioners.

J. Austin Barnes, attorney-at-law, was elected mayor in 1924.







THE HOUSE THAT JILL BUILT.

### Gifts to the City

**F**ROM the efforts of a handful of pioneer women, banded together for purposes more social than civic, grew the company that in 1921 turned over to the city of Beaumont the Temperance building property, valued at \$150,000.

In the early 70's social life was at low ebb in the little sawmill town, and following a lecture by a Mr. Young, organizer for the United Friends of Temperance, a group of young women eagerly siezed on the plan suggested for organizing a branch of the society. The little band met at specified intervals and the growth of the society soon justified the building of a home. In the fall of 1874 these women held an ice-cream supper from which they netted \$100 to buy the lot on the corner of Pearl and Bowie streets. By entertainments, concerts and dances they raised enough money to erect a frame two-story building.

The lower floor was rented to various companies, at one time was occupied by the Enterprise company, and the upper story was a hall which was open to the public and served a popular and useful function in providing a place of entertainment for the young people of the community. Hundreds of meetings were held in its hall and its doors were always open to public affairs.



In 1889 the two-story wooden structure was replaced by the three-story brick building which is now the property of the city of Beaumont, and a company was incorporated on May 1, 1889, known as the Temperance Hall company. When the crowd was assembled for the laying of the cornerstone of the building and all was in readiness for the formal ceremony, it was discovered that there was no cornerstone. The crowd waited while a diligent search was made, and finally the missing stone was discovered on top of what was from then on always known as the "Cornerstone Saloon," where some practical joker had placed it. Whereupon Mrs. George Craig remarked, "That shows that you can't keep the cause of temperance down", and the ceremony proceeded.

Signing the articles of incorporation of the Temperance Hall company were Joanna A. Curtis, Ellen P. O'Brien, George O'B. Millard, Anna Millard, Mrs. S. Weber, Mrs. R. N. Weber, R. N. Weber and Annie M. Bacon.

On April 17, 1921, the company transferred to the city of Beaumont the Temperance Hall building, then valued at \$150,000. The transfer was a notable civic benefaction, and one that reflected the idealism and community love of the surviving members of the organization. Time had taken its toll from the number and brought changed conditions, mak-







WHAT CAPT. W. C. TYRRELL GAVE BEAUMONT.

ing the perpetuation of the trust as a private enterprise inadvisable. The surviving trustees gave to the city the task of utilizing the property and its proceeds for the furtherance of worthy objects. The transfer was made with the provision that one-tenth of the income be devoted to charity, one-tenth to a library fund, and one-tenth to temperance and benevolence. Otherwise the city of Beaumont is free to use the income as it sees fit. The three purposes specified as beneficiaries of the revenue provide a source for the supplying of funds for three needed and most worthy purposes, and suitably perpetuate the names and characters of the donors who have rendered so distinct a public service.

Fulfillment of the city's dream of a public library building was made possible through the philanthropy of the late Captain W. C. Tyrrell, capitalist and public-spirited citizen, who on April 22, 1923, purchased the handsome First Baptist church edifice at Pearl and Forsythe streets and donated the building for library purposes to the people of Beaumont. Captain Tyrrell paid \$70,000 for the property, and the city purchased 90 feet of additional Pearl street property at a cost of \$30,000 to add to the library grounds.

The library is to be known as the Tyrrell Public library, and will be opened upon the completion of a new Baptist church building. The library is an



imposing stone structure with a 90-foot front on Pearl street and extending 146 feet along Forsythe. The initial purchasing fund for books for the library is contained in a gift of another public-spirited Beaumont, Colonel W. S. Davidson, who donated \$5000 toward the library fund. The city library commission, composed of Mrs. J. L. Cunningham, Messrs. W. M. Crook and P. B. Doty are in charge of plans for the fitting and opening of the library.

Future generations of boys and girls in Beaumont will ever have kept alive in their thoughts the memory of Lynn W. Gilbert, son of the late Mr. John W. Gilbert and Mrs. Gilbert. Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert donated to the city on December 8, 1922, a tract of land lying between Eleventh and Thirteenth streets in Calder avenue, which will be made into one of the most complete stadiums in the state. The athletic field which will be called the Lynn Gilbert Memorial stadium, will contain a football field, a baseball diamond, a cinder track, swimming pool and wading pool, tennis courts, playgrounds, all of which will be enclosed and fitted with the finest equipment. The gift is a fitting memorial to the one whose name it bears, typifying as it does the spirit of sportsmanship and wholesome fun, and will fill a need felt more and more with the passing of years for recreation grounds for the high-school pupils and worthy the cause it serves.







VALENTINE WIESS AT AGE OF 21.

### Where Beaumont Plays

**N**OT many years ago it would have been considered extravagant for a city to buy a tract of land and equip it as a place for play and recreation. Today such a proceeding is as essential in city life as the paving of streets, the laying of sidewalks, and the construction of sewers.

In small towns, parks and playgrounds are not of such great importance, for the houses are usually far apart and there are many places for outdoor recreation; but city life forces many people to live in crowded places where there is little space for yard or grass or trees. Because of such conditions, public parks and playgrounds are a necessity.

People now have shorter working hours than they did twenty or twenty-five years ago. This gives more time for healthful outdoor recreation.

Beaumont's parks are beauty spots where its children can play on green grass and under waving trees, and carry with them into manhood and womanhood the recollections of innocent joyous childhood.

#### V. Wiess Park

As a memorial to her father, Valentine Wiess, Mrs. Paul Sergent gave V. Wiess park to Beaumont in 1916. Mr. Wiess was a prominent figure in the upbuilding of Beaumont, and the member of a

pioneer family, being the son of Simon Wiess, who built his home on the Neches river at Wiess Bluff after residing in Beaumont for a time.

In regard to the gift of V. Wiess Park, Mrs. Sergeant said: "I make this gift to Beaumont because I love the city where I was born and I want to show that I appreciate all the people of Beaumont did for my father and me. My father made his fortune here, and in this gift I am merely returning a portion as my contribution to the sense of obligation I have always felt. Of course I want to perpetuate the memory of my father, and for that reason I wish the park to be named for him. But in the last analysis my whole purpose in making the gift, is that I simply want to do it because I love Beaumont and the people of Beaumont and because I want them to have this property, which I believe is very desirable for park purposes."

There is a little spot on Riverside Drive in New York city, where a small slab marked "To the memory of an obedient child" arrests the attention of countless passersby. In like manner V. Wiess Park will not only keep alive thoughts of a good citizen, but each succeeding year will enhance its significance as the memorial of a devoted daughter.

### **Keith Park**

Keith Park is Beaumont's oldest park, and the citizens owe it to the generosity of the pioneers who



laid out the town—Nancy Tevis, Joseph Grigsby and the Pulsifer Company, composed of Joseph Pulsifer, Henry Millard, and Thomas P. Huling, who, in the original partition of the land in 1837, designated certain tracts for schools, parks and public buildings.

Until 1898, the park was undeveloped. Then J. Frank Keith, lumberman and greatly beloved public-spirited citizen, expended \$3,000 in filling and beautifying and in appreciation of his efforts the park was named for him. In early days, Keith park was shaded by giant forest trees, but pavements and buildings sounded the doom of the oaks. The trees there now were planted by Mr. Keith, and he also had the fountain installed.

Fourth of July celebrations in the early days were always held in Keith Park, and the one of July 4, 1878, stands out in the memory of the old-timers. Ox wagons and saddle horses circled the park on that occasion and calico frocks and sunbonnets constituted the picnic costumes of that year. Long tables were erected under the trees and here a barbecue and picnic spread were enjoyed. Mrs. T. A. Lamb was asked to cook squash, which she supplied in huge tubs. Potato and sack races and climbing the greasy pole furnished amusement.

Keith Park boasts three memorials, the Confederate monument, the walking beam of the old

Clifton, and a marker to the Beaumont boys who lost their lives in the World War.

### **Magnolia Park**

Magnolia Park was bought from the Beaumont Improvement company and W. P. H. McFaddin on September 9, 1913, by the city of Beaumont through E. A. Fletcher, mayor. Sixteen and one-fourth acres were deeded by the Beaumont Improvement company, for a consideration of \$12,210, and a little more than half an acre from W. P. H. McFaddin for \$433.50.

### **Tyrrell Park**

Tyrrell Park, a tract of 500 acres, was deeded to the city by Captain W. C. Tyrrell on May 22, 1920, for the purposes of recreation grounds. The land lies west of Hildebrandt's bayou on the Fannett paved highway, and is yet undeveloped into park grounds.

### **Fletcher Park**

In 1910 Capt. W. A. Fletcher deeded to the city certain lots on Collier's Ferry road near the Country Club for public park sites. This property is also unimproved as yet.

### **One-Hundred-Acres Park**

The city also owns a park in the Cartwright addition of 100 acres bought in 1918 for \$50,000. The park fronts on Lafayette street between Fannin and Wall.





THE O'BRIEN OAK.



### A Living Landmark

**A** LIVING, growing landmark, still young in spite of its many years, and with its life insured in the deed to the property—such is the O'Brien oak tree, towering at the foot of Orleans street, and owned by the city of Beaumont.

The tree owes its life and the insurance of its life to the gratitude of the members of the O'Brien family who had romped in its shade during childhood. When the city of Beaumont purchased the property from the O'Brien family for opening Orleans street, the deed to the property stipulated that enough ground around the old tree to preserve it for future years should be allowed for a park.

The story of the O'Brien oak, as told by J. B. Langham, has it that the tree was planted by Cave Johnson, who brought the switch from the Boumstead place on Village Creek. Capt. Johnson was one of the first settlers of this section, and it was from him that the land was purchased by Captain George W. O'Brien about forty-five years ago. At the time of Captain O'Brien's purchase, the tree was not more than one-fourth its present size. It now measures about ten feet in circumference, and its boughs, with a radius of 50 feet, shade a circle of a hundred feet across. For many years those who have passed along in front of the O'Brien home, inspired by the peaceful atmosphere and the pictur-

esque setting, have termed the short stretch "Lovers' Lane".

A story has it that during the early days of Beaumont the first organized court of Jefferson county was convened under this tree. Trials, both civil and criminal, were held there and submitted regularly to impaneled juries.

The oak has gone through hardships as well as years of luxuriant growth. Pictures show it once sick, with its barren limbs stretching up naked and snake-like, but with Captain O'Brien's patient doctoring it recovered from its illness.

And now at the foot of Orleans it stands, furnishing cool shade in the summer and in the cold winter days its dark rich green foliage standing out in bold relief against the somber brown of the surrounding trees of a different species—Beaumont's only live monument to the past.

The efforts to conserve the O'Brien oak bring to mind the historical legend of a similar liveoak that grew in one of the older Georgia cities. When the owners of the land on which that tree stood learned that the city needed the property for a street and it came time to part with it, they made a separate deed to the tree of an amount of land surrounding it, to a sufficient distance to forever protect it. The consideration of this act read: "In consideration

of the benefits received by mankind from it, (the tree's), beneficent boughs and natural beauty." A tablet was placed on the tree, referring to the tree, giving date and place of record, and the old tree, mythically owned by itself, is one of the show places of that Georgia town.

### Gleanings From Beaumont's Book of Life

**R**ECALLING how they lived in the early days of Texas when Beaumont was nothing but a straggling group of log houses along the banks of the Neches river; when the whoops of Indians blended with the coyotes' yells; when bear and deer nosed around the back doors of their homes, Beaumont pioneers recount many interesting details of those first days.

In those times everybody was busy and everybody was neighborly. Everybody was happy and contented.

The following pioneers give a graphic picture from first-hand information:

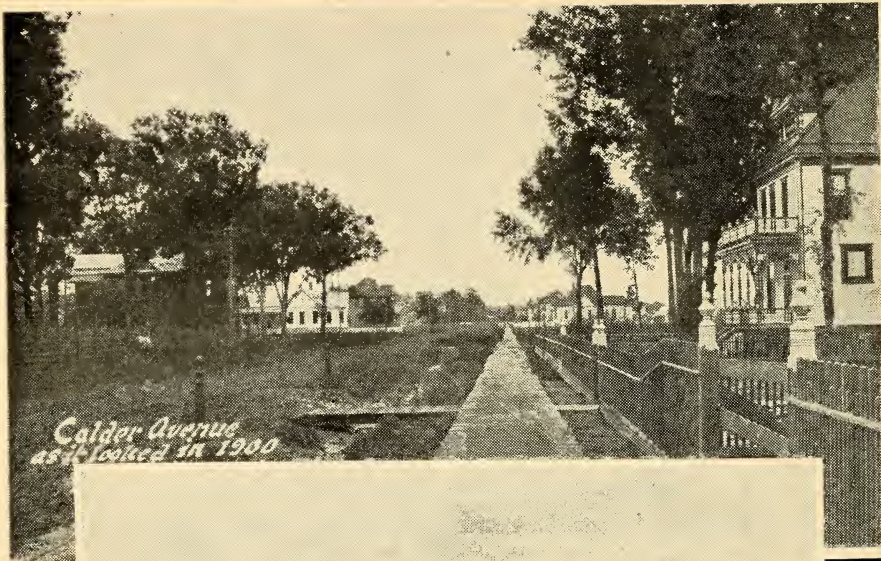
MRS. T. H. LANGHAM.

"Do I remember when Indians roamed about Beaumont's streets? Indeed I do, and of how frightened I always was at seeing them," stated Mrs. T. H. Langham, daughter of David French and granddaughter of John J. French, pioneer residents of this section.

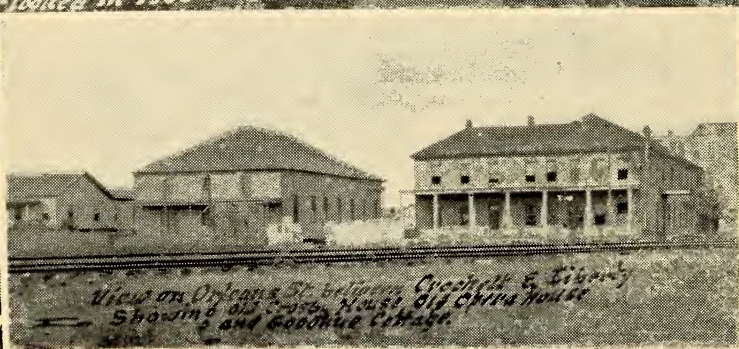
Mrs. Langham's grandfather had a general merchandise store on the Voth road, and she recalls hiding many times at the approach of Indians to the store, with baskets and moccasins and other products to exchange for provisions.



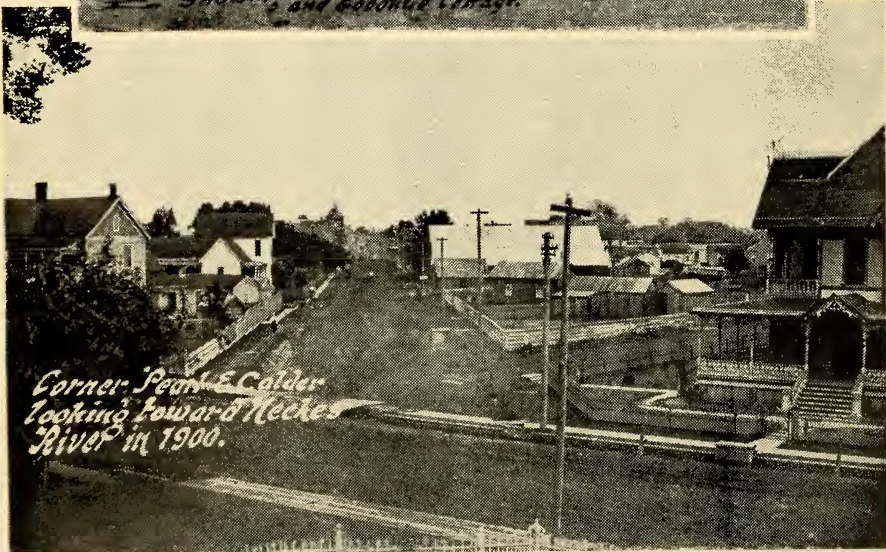




*Calder Avenue  
as it looked in 1900*



*View on Orleans St. between Goodhue & Liberty  
Showing old China House  
and Goodhue Cottage.*



*Corner Pearl & Calder  
Looking toward Neckes  
River in 1900.*



In connection with the store her grandfather conducted a tanyard, where they made leather. Their equipment consisted of fourteen vats and an old mill drawn by a horse. They would go into the woods in the spring and cut around an oak tree while the sap was up and peel off the bark and after it had dried would grind it and sprinkle on the leather to tan it.

There were no schools in those days, and children had to learn the best way they could, declared Mrs. Langham, who attended a private school conducted in a barn for the children of John Marble, and also went to the governess of the McFaddin and Herring children for a short time.

"Our social gatherings were dances and candy pullings, with quilting bees favorites too," said Mrs. Langham. "We danced the quadrille mostly, having the dances at each others' homes. Occasionally there was a gathering at the court house, but these were unusual. And many quilts were made at bees, when a woman would invite in a group of neighbors to help with the quilting. Simple amusements these may appear now, but we had just as much fun in those days as the young people do now," Mrs. Langham stated.

MARTIN HEBERT.

"When I first came in to school in Beaumont I was about eight years old," declared Martin Hebert,

the Hebert family living out on the Fannett road. "I attended a school taught by Mr. Jim Ingalls. This was in 1855.

"Then, there was only one residence between the court house and Calder, owned by a man named Hutchinson. This was not Joseph Hutchinson who married Noah Tevis's widow.

"Our father brought myself and brother to the hanging of Jack Bunch. I protested that I did not want to see the man hanged, but my father thought it would serve as a lesson to us boys.

"At about this same age I remember an Indian came along with a wolf across his shoulder and asked my mother for a bounty. He tried the same game at the homes of all our neighbors.

"And once I remember seeing many Indians\* on their ponies in our yard."

That the best duck pond hereabouts was where the Postoffice Drug Store now stands, is the statement of Mr. Hebert, who recalls that although it was the shorter route, he could employ the path running zigzag through this low place to the Calder home at the head of Pearl street only in dry weather.

Mr. Hebert also remembers that deer would come out of the woods late in the evening to drink in a sink where Millard school is located.

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\*That Indians roamed these parts is also borne out by the statements of Emmett Fletcher, who, when a boy helped to dig skeletons out of the shell bank at Port Neches and of Mrs. Ed Hebert, who found arrows buried on the beach at Caplen.







**MRS. SIMON WIESS AND DAUGHTER,  
MRS. PAULINE WIESS COFFIN.**

## MRS. PAULINE WIESS COFFIN.

Mrs. Pauline Wiess Coffin, who still lives in the house built by her father at Wiess Bluff in 1858, has also seen Indians roaming the streets of Beaumont. She recalls hearing her mother tell that General Sam Houston, a familiar figure in the streets of Nacogdoches, gave the Indians and Mexicans papers privileging them to beg, and how frightened her mother was one evening, when alone in the house, she heard the shutters rattle, then saw an Indian's arm stuck through the window, waving such a paper.

Mrs. Coffin's father, Simon Wiess, moved from Nacogdoches to Beaumont early in 1839, making the trip down the Neches on a keel boat, and was engaged in the merchandise business, later moving to Wiess Bluff, where he was in charge of the big cotton trade from the upper country down the Neches.

Contrasting prices then and now, Mrs. Coffin recalls that it cost her father only \$18 to get a nine-mile road cleared out and built, connecting their home place with the highway at Pine Island. Her mother was the first woman to go over the road, riding horseback. Then it cost only \$2.50 to make the boat trip from Wiess Bluff to Sabine Pass, with meals included.

It was a neighborly custom to borrow fire in case a housewife had no steel and flint handy, and every-

body guarded "spunk" almost with his life. Lard oil lamps were stylish, and people moulded candles from beeswax.

The country was so sparsely settled that there were few social activities, but occasionally there was a candy pulling and a famous camp-meeting was held at Pine Island yearly, with people attending from miles around. All women hereabouts wore homespun dresses, with, very rarely, a dress pattern bought in New Orleans. Traveling was on horseback, and a trip from Wiess Bluff to Houston was a matter of weeks, a trip that may now be made by airship in an hour and a half.

Houston was the capital of the republic then, and boasted but a few houses, and Galveston was a group of houses built of wreckage on a barren island.

#### GILBERT STEPHENSON.

"What did Beaumont look like when I first remember? Just like these woods about my house now, only without the roads that we have through here," remarked Gilbert Stephenson, sixth son of Mary Tevis and Gilbert Stephenson. Mr. Stephenson now lives in Duncan's woods in Orange county, near the original homesite of his father, who, tradition says, was the first man to cross the Neches and traverse the land whereon the present city of Beaumont is located, and was the first man to be married in this county.



Mr. Stephenson, who is eighty years old, recalls the early days with kindly eyes, telling of the neighborliness of all the settlers when anything one had was the common property of all.

He remembers visiting often in the home of "Grandma Nancy Hutchinson", which was built on the bluff overlooking the river, just above where the Southern Pacific bridge now is. Here his grandmother conducted for a number of years Tevis's ferry, and many of his little boy memories are associated with her home, where he spent much of his time.

He explained that many people erroneously spoke of the home of his uncle, young Noah Tevis, which was about where Pipkin Park now is, as the home of his grandmother, who was the wife of the Noah Tevis, Beaumont's first settler. At the old homesite, Mr. Stephenson explained, are still standing some of the trees, and a crepe myrtle bush planted by his grandmother, living and green as the memories of her life.

Only one undimmed regret of his childhood did Mr. Stephenson express. There was a criminal named Bunch who was hanged in Beaumont, and young Gilbert, hurrying to the scene much as a present-day youngster rushes to the newest thriller in movies, arrived too late to witness the hanging.

Mr. Stephenson also mentioned a store along the river front owned by one Hop Johnson, with a private pier to the back from which boats unloaded merchandise for the store.

THOMAS H. CRAWFORD.

"Chish no ho Chiffo monte ho?" That's Alabama Indian for "What is your name?" according to Thomas F. Crawford of Glenmora, Louisiana, who lived here when the Alabama Indians were settled on Village Creek.

He remembers seeing Indian braves carry water in the primitive fashion used by the Jews in Palestine two thousand years ago, in skins, down Pearl street, followed by squaws trailing behind with papooses strapped to their backs. Curious redskins would peep in at the busy white man when he attended the warehouses at Wiess Bluff.

The Crawfords settled in Hardin county 75 years ago when there were no roads, only a few bridle paths, and when Neches swamp was almost a solid canebrake, inhabited by wild cattle, bear, deer, panther and wolves. Getting meat was an easy matter in those days, for it was there for the killing and the meal was ground in a hand-mill or beat out on a mortar.

The first road through these parts was from Herring's store to Towns Bluff, a distance of about 55

miles, according to Mr. Crawford. There were only five settlements on the road, and there were no churches, no school and no mail.

Herds of horses and cattle roamed over the prairies in those days, and one of Mr. Crawford's first jobs was assisting in rounding up the stock of Colonel Lucy of Sour Lake. The price of horses then was from \$7 to \$12.

#### CAPTAIN W. E. ROGERS.

"There was lots of sickness in Beaumont sixty years ago," declared Captain W. E. Rogers, who for forty years did a little bit of everything on the Neches river.

"The water was bad because we didn't have any supply but from wells. Well, now, I do believe a few got water from the river. This wasn't healthy, and four doctors weren't too many for 250 people. A little later people built cisterns, and their health improved wonderfully."

When Captain Rogers first came to Beaumont it was the smallest place around here. It had a population of 250, and that figure included men, women, and children too. Orange was larger than Beaumont. Sabine Pass was the big city of the district. It was twice as big as Beaumont, for Sabine Pass had over 500 people.

Captain Rogers remembers making trips to Concord, once an important port of call, Sabine Lake

and its tributaries. "We carried cotton and cattle mostly," he stated.

Captain Rogers came to Beaumont in February, 1857. He got a job on the "Doctor Massey" that made regular trips between Beaumont and Sabine Pass. It took about eight hours then. Cave Johnson was the master of the boat.

#### STEVE W. PIPKIN.

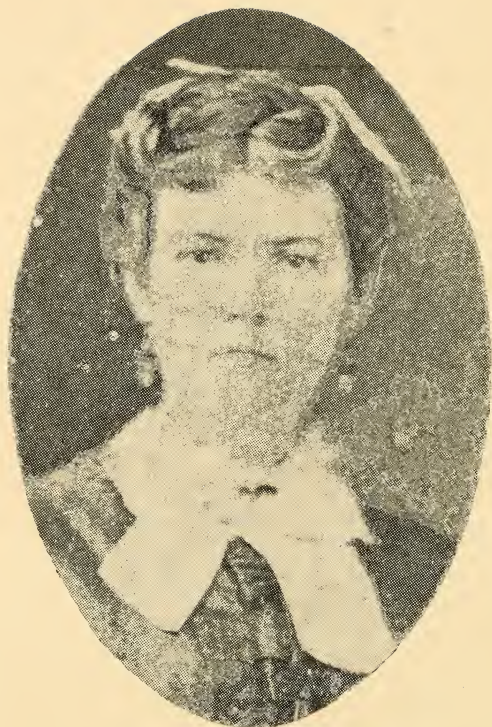
Roar of cannon at the battle of Sabine Pass still sound in the ears of Steve W. Pipkin, who as a little child accompanied his father, Rev. John Fletcher Pipkin, pioneer Methodist minister, in his visits of mercy to the wounded brought here from Sabine Pass.

And seeing a fourteen-year-old boy with his leg shot off, indelibly impressed upon the Beaumont child the cruelty of war. Mr. Pipkin remembers, too, seeing Confederate soldiers take a man away from Sheriff Jack Tevis and hang him in a grove of gum trees where the Alexander building now stands. The victim had killed a fellow soldier.

Turning to more pleasant pictures in his book of memory, Mr. Pipkin told of Sunday school picnics enjoyed by his little comrades of the long ago. Town ball played with a rubber ball, bull pen and mumble peg were favorite games. And the Cushman baseball team galloped around in what is now Keith Park, when the city was in its infancy.







MRS. NORA PIPKIN HALTOM,  
POSTMISTRESS DURING CIVIL WAR.

No. Mr. Pipkin can not remember any Christmas trees in the young town, but recalls that he never failed to hang up his stocking and that Santa Claus never overlooked even the tiny settlement of 200 that Beaumont was then.

Mr. Pipkin says during his childhood his clothes and shoes were made at home, and right after the Civil War his entire outfit consisted of a long hickory shirt. The women of his family knitted socks and fashioned hats from palmettoes.

#### JOSEPH MILTON CHASTEEN.

Joseph Milton Chasteen, only survivor of the battle of Sabine Pass, tells of first coming to Beaumont in 1863, and says there were only a few hundred people living here at that time. In recalling the trip to Beaumont over the old Texas railroad, he told how he and his fellow soldiers would get out and kill alligators for sport between helping push the train over particularly bad stretches. While killing their fifth alligator, the train pulled out and left them, and they had to walk into town.

Standing out vividly in his mind are the details of the battle of Sabine Pass on September 8, 1863. This was the second attempt of the Federal army to invade Texas, five thousand soldiers leaving New Orleans for Sabine Pass with the purpose of landing there and advancing on Beaumont and Houston. But when the army reached Sabine Pass and at-

tacked the fort its garrison of forty-one men under Lieutenant Dick Dowling not only repulsed them, but, without losing a single man, captured two of their gunboats and 500 prisoners.

Mr. Chasteen told how Dick Dowling's men double-quickened into action and how the "Clifton" went down. He mentioned it was the old walking beam of the "Clifton" that stood under the trees in Keith Park, thanks to the efforts of Frank W. Godsey, who, thirteen years ago conceived the idea of thus preserving this relic of the war between the states.

He saw Colonel Crockman hand over his sword to Dick Dowling and remembered that bacon, hay, molasses and horses were scrambled up together in the water after the fight.

Mrs. Chasteen resided at Sabine Pass also, at at the time of the battle, and, with her mother, cooked beef, bread and coffee and sent the food into the fort to Dowling's band.

MRS. T. J. RUSSELL.

"When I came to Beaumont forty years ago, there were but two wall-papered rooms in the town", declared Mrs. T. J. Russell, "and many of the early settlers died from colds contracted in box houses. One of the papered rooms was the parlor of the John Craig home in Main street near Keith



Park. (This house is still standing.) I remember hearing a neighbor declare, 'No indeed, I don't want my good heart pine covered by paper'."

In the fall of 1884 a circus came to town, and this fact was considered so important that court adjourned and everybody attended. The circus was held on the grounds of Dr. Z. T. Fuller's home in Calder avenue.

Judge T. J. Russell planted the cottonwood trees on Main street between Crockett and Liberty, according to Mrs. Russell.

In 1869 Cypress was the principal business street, and all travel was along it down to Main, and from there to the court house on Main street. The Liberty road ran out where Liberty street now is, Mrs. Russell quotes Judge Russell as having told her. The Hardin county road was up Pine street to Long and Company's mill, thence northwest by the McGuire Chaison home and on to Pine Island. This road was in ancient days known as the Pea Ridge road.

#### MRS. R. N. WEBER.

The general store in the old days was a fitting forerunner of the present department store, and everything from a hairpin to a plough might be bought under the same roof then as now, declared Mrs. R. N. Weber, one of Beaumont's oldest native daughters.

But there was no art in the matter of display in those stores of early days, no departments for each type of article, for then hose and horse radish, corn and calico were shown side by side. Nor were there exclusive rights to styles for the ladies of that period, and the merchants made no mention of the duplication of a dress pattern. Every woman in the settlement wore dresses from the same bolt of calico, and were perfectly contented too, Mrs. Weber said. The merchandise for these stores was bought in the east, brought to Galveston by boat and from there to Beaumont either by boat or in a wagon, a perilous journey either way.

Well does Mrs. Weber remember Water street, long since washed away by the river, that ran along the banks of the Neches behind the home of the Millards, thence up the river. She also recalls the old court house in what is now Keith Park, where "we went to dances on Saturday night and on Sunday night attended church services," she states.

#### MRS. CHARLES J. CHAISON.

If the old violin now in the possession of Mrs. Charles J. Chaison could speak, how much might be told of the romances and stories that clustered about the dances given in Beaumont during the period following the Civil War. For wherever there was a dance in those days, it was that violin, then about one hundred and fifty years old, that furnished

the music with Mrs. Chaison's father, Frank LeBleu, as the musician.

And still further tales of adventure might the old violin tell of its early days, when it was brought to America by Mrs. Chaison's great-great-grandfather, Colie LeBleu, one of the company of Frenchmen who accompanied the dashing young cavalier, Lafayette, to the assistance of the struggling colonies in their fight for freedom from the English rule. Of military dances of brilliance and courtliness it would probably speak, of the gay scenes when parties were arranged for the young French nobleman as he was entertained by the colonial hostesses of high degree; of its journey with Mr. LeBleu to the newly-settled section of Louisiana; of the boy, Frank LeBleu, and his ambitions as he played the instrument, of its final journey to Texas, where, in Beaumont, Mr. LeBleu settled, and whose music is remembered by many Beaumonters today.

The violin was made in the early seventeen hundreds, and has been handed down as an heirloom to the oldest son since that time. Since the death of Mrs. Chaison's father it has lain mute in her home, a prized possession, reminder of its youthful days when Beaumont was only a settlement on the Neches river.

The story of the old violin is but one of those told in the Chaison home, both by Mrs. Charles

Chaison and by Mrs. Clara Chaison, her mother-in-law, who was married and came to Beaumont in 1861. Mrs. Clara Chaison remembers when there were only three stores here, one owned by Messrs. Mark and William Wiess, one by John C. Craig, and one by C. C. Caswell, and there were four saloons in the little settlement. Her children attended a school conducted by George H. Stovall, which was located at about the present site of the First National bank. Pupils paid \$1.50 per month for the tuition.

The coming of the Southern Pacific railroad to the city is another incident that stands out in her memory. The engine was brought on a barge up the river, and crowds turned out to see the "iron horse" that could make the trip from Orange to Houston in only one day. There was only one mixed train each way a day, the trip from Orange to Houston beginning early in the morning and lasting until late at night.

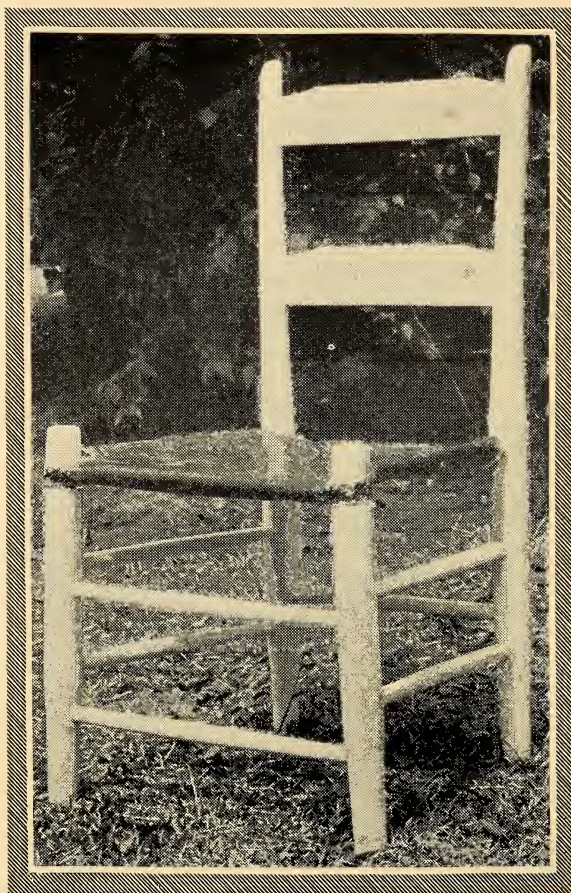
#### W. P. H. McFADDIN.

"Early settlers didn't have much nor didn't want much", declared W. P. H. McFaddin, who recalls many interesting stories told him by his father, of his own and his grandfather's experiences. "My father and other pioneers as little boys had no clothes but a long homespun shirt," he remarked.

Mr. McFaddin's grandfather, James McFaddin, came to Texas from Louisiana in 1824, remaining







PIONEER CHAIR IN W. P. H. MCFADDIN FAMILY.

for a short period and then returning to Louisiana. Later he came back to Jefferson county, in 1833, to make his home here. At the time of his first visit only three families were living in the county, the Noah Tevis family on the banks of the Neches, Jack Hildebrandt, living about ten miles southwest of Beaumont, and Tom Lewis, who lived three miles from town.

Mr. McFaddin was born and now lives on the land originally granted to his father by the government. His father, William McFaddin, was in the battle of San Jacinto, and being only 17, and too young to take part in the battle, he was detailed to hold horses. He saw the surrender of Santa Anna, and was finally discharged from the army at San Antonio, walking from that city to Beaumont. Mr. McFaddin recalled hearing his father tell that before the battle of San Jacinto, word was brought to the settlers in Beaumont to vacate the town before the advance of the Mexican warrior, Santa Anna, and Wash Tevis assisted the women and children to move across the Neches into what is now Orange county for protection. There they remained for several weeks, returning to their homes after news of the surrender of Santa Anna.

All the country round Beaumont was prairie and marsh land with few or no trees except along the river and bayous during the days of the early set-

tlers, and Mr. McFaddin cites particularly the heavy pine grove near Rosedale, which was an open prairie when he first remembers.

Turkeys, deer and other wild game could be killed not more than half a mile from one's home in those days, and corn, potatoes and fruit, with pork and beef, was the food of the pioneers. That deer roamed at will over primitive Beaumont is borne out by Mr. McFaddin's statement that he saw a deer butt a Mr. Scott into the river right in front of the O'Brien home.

Pony racing and dancing were the favored pastimes. In 1866 James Cleland opened Beaumont's first dancing school, teaching a group of young people at the home of William McFaddin. At the private school on the place of Mr. McFaddin the girls had a unique dancing hall, a mound on the playgrounds hardened by constant rope-jumping, where they practiced the newest steps taught by the dancing master. All-night dances at homes were weekly affairs, and two negro musicians who fiddled all night for \$2.50 each comprised the orchestra for the affairs. Square dances, waltz, and schottische were the favorite steps.

Soldies camping on his father's land during the Civil War left an indelible impression on the memory of Mr. McFaddin, not because of their warlike tendencies, but for the fact that each morning he



might visit the camp and exchange a bowl of clabber for two crackers with some soldier, and crackers were a treat the little Texas boy could never forget.

The children of his day attended private schools entirely, there being one on his father's place taught by Ambrose Dudley Kent, another in a gum thicket on Pearl street where the First National bank now stands, taught by George H. Stovall, and another where the Wilson hardware company warehouse now is, taught by a Mrs. Lynch.

J. B. LANGHAM.

"I helped to fell the trees and plough up Pearl street," declared J. B. Langham, member of a pioneer east Texas family.

"My father bought the block facing Pearl between Bowie and Fannin in 1876 for \$320, and dug a ditch round it to drain off the water. We hauled in sawdust from the sawmills to fill, and built a wooden livery stable where the City National Bank is now," he continued.

Mr. Langham remembers killing a deer 300 yards from where the bank now stands. He also told about seeing cattle standing belly deep in water and mud on the present site of the Perlstein building.

He was twelve years old during the Civil War, and recalls herding beeves for the Confederate government at that age. He also told that it was from his

father's farm on Corn road, now Calder road, that the cotton used for breastworks at the battle of Sabine Pass was secured.

Bears, with dogs after them, was no uncommon sight on Pearl street in those days, stated Mr. Langham, who also recalled the severity of the storm of 1867.

#### CAPTAIN JAMES GARVIN.

Captain James Garvin, veteran captain of ships that plied the gulf ports in the halycon days of yore, likes to tell of a city he knew, a "stop on the river called Beaumont" as he expressed it, when he first remembers the place. Captain Garvin came to Beaumont when he was only one year old, in 1856.

There was only one store here when he first remembers, stated Captain Garvin, and it was at the foot of Pearl street on the river.

The first industry that Beaumont had was a plant down on the river which slaughtered cattle for the hides and tallow. They did not save the meat then, just boiled it up to get the tallow and dumped the remains into the river through a chute. There were thousands of catfish that fed around the chute.

Captain Garvin served as cabin boy and grew up on the water. He brought in the supplies that went into many homes of the pioneers, so that in reality he became a part of the gulf coast.

## MRS. GEORGE O'B. MILLARD.

There was practically no entertainment of any nature for the young people in the first years of her married life in Beaumont, said Mrs. George O'B. Millard, who came as a bride to the little village from Louisiana in 1861. Her first entertainment after moving to the place was a picnic given in a grove where the Magnolia cemetery now is.

Mr. Millard, her husband, was a landmark in early educational affairs, and a monument to him has been erected on the Millard school grounds.

## MRS. GEORGE W. CARROLL.

From Beaumont's first marriage in 1832 in the log cabin home of Noah and Nancy Tevis on the banks of the Neches, to the marriage of the first couple in a church in 1877 is but a step in the life of the little town.

Mr. George W. Carroll and Miss Underhill Mixson were the first couple who had a church wedding, their ceremony being performed November 20, 1877, in the structure built jointly by the Baptists and Methodists on the site where the T. S. Reed grocery company building now stands. Mrs. Carroll was the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jeremiah Mixson, who lived in the block where the Alamo cafe, and the Carter music store are now located. Mr. Mixson was an early architect, and in addition designed and made furniture that is still treasured by the descend-

ants of the pioneers for whom he built it. Their children were, in addition to Mrs. Carroll, Mrs. Mark Wiess, James Craig Mixson and John Charles Mixson.

MRS. C. E. WALDEN.

Defying the encroachment of the town, two daughters of the junior George W. Smyth, Mesdames C. E. Walden and R. F. Cheesman, are residing on the old home site, other pioneer families having long since moved to sections of the city far removed from their original homes.

"In an early period of Beaumont's history, many of the dwellings were clustered around Long and Company's mill, near the creosote works, but the passage of time has brought strange changes to this part of the city," said Mrs. Walden. "As the steady blows of the hammers sent Beaumont landmarks to destruction in a cloud of dust, our neighbors left the old settlement."

"My father first lived about where the Duke hotel is, when he moved to Beaumont from Jasper county in 1877.

"I remember when a little thing, my mother would stand on our porch and watch me safely into Mr. John Craig's store, which stood on Main street close to the new Elks club," declared Mrs. Walden. Then it was a clean sweep from the Smyth home to the Craig store.



A glimpse at the books now in the possession of Mrs. Walden which came from the library of her grandfather, George W. Smyth, first congressman from east Texas, makes one stop and catch breath at the thought that the volumes were brought by covered wagon from North Carolina to Smith's Bluff in 1828, then removed to Jasper county, where the distinguished pioneer later made his home. These books have survived all the crudeness of primitive days, both bindings and illustrations being in perfect condition.

Among her books are John Bunyan's complete works, "National Portrait Gallery", "The History of General Francis Marion". Then there is "The Bandit's Bride" a novel, which belonged to Mrs. Walden's grandmother, Mrs. John Blewett of Jasper. The heroine of this story is named "Rosalthe" and the name has been perpetuated in the Smyth family.

#### JOE LOEB.

The first cement sidewalk built in east Texas is the one running on the Travis street side of the old V. Wiess home, according to Joe Loeb, many of whose boyhood recollections center around that neighborhood. The old horse block which still stands bears the inscription: "V. Wiess-1886."

"We boys almost wore that sidewalk out riding our bicycles on it, the high-wheeled kind," he said.

And at the corner of Mulberry and Travis is a huge cottonwood tree with a chain right through the middle of it, which bears evidence of the pranks of Joe Loeb, Alfred and Albert Eastham and Earl Wilson. This chain came from an abandoned planing mill at the corner of Pine and Mulberry, and Joe Loeb remembers tossing it into the fork of the tiny cottonwood sapling.

Another recollection of this same neighborhood is of the mule car system that was operated for a few months. The line started at Wall street and went to Long and Company's mill.

Mr. Loeb recalls with enthusiasm the battle between the Confederates and Federals that the boys and girls of his day staged one Christmas eve about where the Clairemont now is. They fought it out with skyrockets, and Mr. Loeb, a scarred veteran of the battle, was struck just above his eye. He also tells how once, while hunting for whiskey flasks in the bushes that grew six feet high on the triangle in front of the new Elks club, he found the body of a dead man. Mr. Loeb and his boyhood companions did a thriving business selling whiskey flasks, and their income furnished them funds for circuses and other amusements of the day.

Mr. Loeb also remembers when Samuel Webber kept the postoffice on the river bank near the power plant, and there was a two-by-four board across the marsh to its door.







CAME HERE IN SHOE BOX.



Surrounding the postoffice were the dwellings of the Caswells, Beaumonts, Webbers, Van Wormers, Leonards, Loebes and Schwerins.

MRS. HOMER CHAMBERS.

"That liveoak tree in the Hubert Fuller yard, 934 Calder, came to Beaumont in a shoe box," declared Mrs. Homer Chambers, descendant of prominent pioneers.

"It was a gift in 1888 to my father, Dr. Z. T. Fuller, from Mat King, brother-in-law of Patillo Higgins. Mr. King dug it up from Duncan's woods in Orange county. My mother, who greatly loved trees, planted it, and also other trees familiar to Beaumont folk. When but a child she planted those in the yard of the old Gilbert home in Liberty avenue, and the cottonwoods and elms in the same block, still giving grateful shade to passersby."

Nathan Gilbert and his wife, Caroline A. Gilbert, lived for many years at 820 Liberty avenue in the home afterwards purchased by W. P. H. McFaddin. Their children were John N. Gilbert, Wilbur Gilbert, Nathan Gilbert and Mesdames Z. T. Fuller, Frank Smith and M. L. Hinchee.

FRANK W. GODSEY.

One of the first orders for public buildings by the early Beaumont citizens was on February 5, 1838, according to Frank W. Godsey. On this date

the commissioners decided to erect a jail and county clerk's office on the block given by the city founders for that purpose, and asked for bids. The specifications called for a building 16x20 feet, two stories high. James Ingalls was awarded the contract for the building at \$3800.

In 1840 the contract for the first wharf facilities for the section was made. The articles of agreement were between Joseph Hutchinson, husband of Nancy Tevis Hutchinson, and Lucien Hopson, in which Joseph Hutchinson agrees to "furnish the land to build a certain canal 30 feet wide and so deep as may be necessary to float a vessel drawing 5 feet of water, and land on the south side for the purpose building a wharf, also timber necessary for said canal and wharf to be cut on any part of his land, free of charge."

Of records of public roads, Mr. Godsey states, the first order was made July 3, 1837 when Joseph Grigsby, H. Williams, George Allen, R. Ballue, and Clark Beach were appointed reviewers of roads to be laid out between Ballue's ferry on the Sabine river to the western boundary of the county. Bids were received from W. P. Clark and N. Holbert for the work, the two bids being each \$250.

The first move toward a county courthouse was made on March 8, 1853, when the commissioners' court ordered bids for the building of a court house

forty feet square and eighteen feet under the eaves. Jeremiah Mixson was awarded the contract, and he executed a bond in the sum of \$3200 to complete the same by March, 1854.

J. H. RACHFORD.

"When Beaumont first became a town, Pearl street property sold for a song. The block on which the Perlstein building now stands, lots 73 to 84 of block 14, were sold January 19, 1859, by Pulsifer, Huling and Millard to C. H. Ruff for \$80," said J. H. Rachford. Today that block could not be bought for half a million.

Another contrast in real estate values of the early and present day is found in a deed made by the heirs of Joseph Grigsby to T. F. McKinney, selling to him the block of land between Pearl and Orleans for \$52.66. In this block now stand Hotel Beaumont, the Alexander building and the Keith building.

JAMES V. POLK.

Coming down through the years to 1902, when Beaumont had grown up from the struggling village of 500 to a booming city, growing so rapidly that civic improvements were far behind the needs, club women recall the first state federation convention ever held here in November, 1902. Sessions were held in the old Kyle Theater, and the old First Methodist church, where the T. S. Reed grocery store now stands.

Important club issues that were discussed at this meeting have faded before the memory of the rains of the convention days, when streets were flooded and delegates were met in boats. The rain, which began the day of the opening of the convention in November, continued every day until March 25, witnesses declare, and streets were impassable.

J. V. Polk tells of how the real flood came the day following the closing of the convention, and how chagrined hostesses were who had persuaded their guests to remain over to see a play at the Kyle theater, when the piano floated in the pit.

The hostess club for this convention was the Woman's Reading club. It was organized on January 18, 1895, by five ladies, Mesdames T. A. Lamb, Cush Wiess, Hal W. Greer, and Misses Mary Lamb and Harriet Farrand, who had gathered at Mrs. Greer's suggestion at her home to organize a literary club. From this small beginning has grown the present large and active organization, the Woman's Reading club, first woman's club in Texas to own its own home, and at the forefront of all civic movements in the city.

#### MRS. R. D. KENT.

All that was cultural in Beaumont fifty years ago centered round "Aunt Mat" Miller, who lived about half-way between Long and Company mill and the cemetery, according to Mrs. R. D. Kent,







CHILDREN'S COSTUMES OF EARLY DAYS IN BEAUMONT.

who can remember walking three miles with her mother to visit "Aunt Mat", and to this day Mrs. Kent delights to tell how "Aunt Mat" held aloft the torch.

"Aunt Mat" was thrown from a carriage in girlhood, becoming a hopeless cripple. Her charm of personality, fine spirit and splendid brain quality drew early Beaumonters like a magnet and Mrs. Kent says she doesn't know how, but given only a few days in Beaumont and strangers always found their way to "Aunt Mat's" door, never leaving without refreshment of mind and spirit.

She was a gifted writer, and in the Patillo family connection, of which she was a member, there is treasured more than one volume from her pen. "Aunt Mat" and Augusta Evans Wilson, author of "St. Elmo," "Infelice," and "At the Mercy of Tiberius" were devoted friends and literary associates.

**BEAUMONT'S YARD STICK****Here's Its Population by Decades:**

<b>1880</b> .....	<b>1,620</b>
<b>1890</b> .....	<b>3,296</b>
<b>1900</b> .....	<b>9,427</b>
<b>1910</b> .....	<b>20,640</b>
<b>1915</b> .....	<b>26,378</b>
<b>1920</b> .....	<b>40,422</b>
<b>1924</b> .....	<b>48,728</b>





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